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EDITOR'S NOTES

The January issue has seven interesting articles: two in epistemology and one each in African ethnophilosophy, ethics and advertisement, philosophy and culture, philosophy of education, and political philosophy. There is a book review and a book note. Starting this year (2011), indigenous philosophical papers will be labelled *ethnophilosophy*, or the cultural approach to philosophy, to distinguish it from *philosophy proper*, or the traditional approach.

In his paper, "Philosophical problem of evil: Response to E. O. Oduwole," Ademola Kazeem Fayemi disagrees with Oduwole's earlier paper by arguing that the Yoruba-African God, Olodumare, does not have the omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent attributes of the Judaeo-theistic God and can, therefore, be exonerated from the philosophical problem of evil. Moreover, the Yoruba do not hold a dialectical perspective of *ire* (goodness) and *ibi* (evilness) but a complimentary relational view of both as coexisting nondualistically.

Maybelle Marie O. Padua attempts to understand the skeptical condition in the paper, "The skeptic's passion." The author takes the position—following Aquinas—that the disposition to doubt is willed and, thus, certainty becomes a necessary antidote to this disposition. But the need to be certain and to trust others requires "a willingness to open oneself dynamically in self-giving and submission to others," and to forego the thought that one can be self-sufficient by oneself.

According to Emmanuel Ola Akintona in "Nonconceptualism and the cognitive process of perception," the process of perception includes both conceptual and nonconceptual aspects. Conceptualism argues that since concepts are intentional contents of perception, then creatures without conceptual ability can only have a content-bearing or nonconceptual state for lack of concept formation, linguistic ability, and memory. The author contends that human perception is not limited to conceptual cognition but also complementarily includes in cognition the nonconceptual aspect of the visual or perceptual field.

In "Ethics of business ads directed at children," Napoleon M. Mabaquiao Jr. tries to show the unjustifiability of children advertising on moral grounds. Business advertisement generally aims at persuading and not manipulating consumers but since children "lack the capacity to make autonomous, rational, or free and informed buying decisions," then ads directed at them are rendered manipulative. The rest of the article deals with some unethical techniques on how ads take advantage of children's vulnerability.

Rolando M. Gripaldo's argument in "Philosophy in culture: Embedded and disembedded" is that since philosophy does not exist in a vacuum, then it emerges from one's own culture either in the form of a people's collective worldview as manifested in their languages, folk songs, folk sayings, riddles, myths, and so on, or in a thinker's philosophical reflections of his time and situation, locally

or globally. Philosophy is here viewed broadly to transcend the quarrels among philosophers who exclude one school from other schools. Philosophy can be disembedded from this culture by an ethnophilosopher or a historian/scholar of philosophy.

In "Inclusive education and social transformation," Jeffrey M. Centeno defines the "philosophy of inclusion as a fundamental condition of social transformation mediated by inclusive education." The principle of inclusion disposes of marginalization as it excludes no one outside itself. It embraces cultural pluralism and socially transforms education into an inclusive system with emphasis on the "social dimensions of learning and living together." In view of the changing circumstances of society, the challenge to "institutionalize inclusion as a wise education philosophy and policy" becomes imperative among institutions within the educational system.

Rizalino Noble Malabed forwards the view in the paper, "Leaving politics behind: Arendtian and Hegelian reading of Hobbes," that the social contract of Hobbes leaves politics behind in the state of nature. As it stands, it repudiates politics in the hands of the people who are alienated from it as the social contract institutionalizes political power within the domain of the Sovereign. In surrendering their political wills and judgments to the Commonwealth, the people as subjects—though guaranteed to have a peaceful and secure life—are politically left out, and modern state politics, "as applied to subjects"—from a Hegelian and Arendtian interpretation of Hobbes—"has always been the administration and care of mere life."

Peter Collins's review of Terry Eagleton's book, *The meaning of life: A very short introduction*, is both informative and analytical. He tells us about the depth and breadth of this short book, about the author's analysis of the meaning of life from diverse philosophical points of view, and the meaning of "meaning" itself. The review is insightful and provokes one into rethinking his or her own concepts regarding the meaning of one's life.

The short note of Nicolo Masakayan on Nicholas Fearn's *Philosophy: The latest answers to the oldest questions* is incisive in trying to decipher Fearn's probable intent in writing the book. Fearn describes the contemporary state of philosophy as "post-heroic" in contrast to the "heroic age" of modern philosophy where philosophers put forward monumental treatises. This, to Masakayan, seems to suggest the analytic way of philosophizing "with its emphasis on clarity and step-by-step analysis."

As in previous issues, the editorial board wishes our readers happy reading.

Rolando M. Gripaldo
Editor

PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM OF EVIL: RESPONSE TO E. O. ODUWOLE

Ademola Kazeem Fayemi
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The central theses of Oduwole are: first, that Olodumare (God in Yoruba African belief) cannot be exonerated from the philosophical problem of evil for He possesses similar attributes to the theistic God in Judeo-Christian tradition; and second, that the Yoruba hold a strong dialectical principle of Ire (Goodness) and Ibi (Evilness) in their daily world encounters. This paper challenges these positions as inaccurate representations of the Yoruba African understanding of the nature of evil. It exposes the conceptual errors that fraught Oduwole's paper and provides further rigorous analytical expositions of the nature of evil in Yoruba-African philosophical thought.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of evil is one of the most fundamental problems that philosophers have given much attention to. Like other philosophical problems, the last paper has neither been written on this problem of evil nor has it been totally put to rest. A renewed interest in this problem was instigated by a recent international journal article – “The dialectics of *Ire* (goodness) and *Ibi* (evilness): An African understanding of the philosophical problem of evil” by E. O. Oduwole (2007, 1-13).

In this paper, Oduwole raises some fundamental issues and perhaps an African dimension to the philosophical problem of evil. She argues a case for the universality of the philosophical problem of evil across all cultures of the world and concludes that *Olodumare* (God in Yoruba belief) cannot be exonerated from the philosophical problem of evil for He possesses similar positive attributes of the theistic God in Judeo-Christian tradition. She defends the thesis that the Yoruba hold a strong dialectical principle of *Ire* (goodness) and *Ibi* (evilness) in their daily worldly encounter. Fundamental and most relevant to our discussion, is her recommendation for further research on the concepts of “*Esu*” and the “devil” and of *Esu* and *Olodumare* in the conclusive part of her essay.

This call is an intellectual charge and exercise in conceptual decolonization of the notion of *Esu* in Yoruba religion with a view to furthering the discourse on the problem of evil in African metaphysics. Conceptual decolonization is the critical examination of the conceptual framework upon which the thought of a culture is erected in order to avoid colonization of concepts. In a sense, this paper is a critical

reaction to that call. But how applicable is the idea of conceptual decolonization to the problem of evil? What is this problem of evil? Does it exist in African philosophical thought? Is there any African theodicy to the problem? In what ways do the Yoruba-African perceptions of the problem differ from that of the Western experiences and analysis? Plausible answers are provided to these fundamental questions in the rest of the paper.

PROBLEM OF EVIL STATED

The reality of evil in the world has long been a puzzle to the human mind. The fundamentality of the problem is of philosophical interest. Like other philosophical problems, it has been constantly reformulated in different contexts and cultures. It has received wider dimensions from several different points of view and given partial solutions in each age. Yet the problem of evil remains a perennial metaphysical issue in philosophy. Our concern in this section is to state in clear terms what this problem really is.

The problem of evil is used in an alleged proof that God does not exist (White 1975, 14). The problem emphasizes the contradiction in the character or attributes of God in relation to the factors of the world and of human experiences that are considered evil. By "evil" we mean any experience that is injurious, painful, hurtful, regretful or calamitous. It is anything that is morally and physically bad or unacceptable. Evil can be conceived as anything that impedes or obstructs the achievement of goals, ideas, happiness or general well being.

Though the exact formulation of the argument or arguments for the problem of evil is a matter of dispute, Oduwole states the problem in five constatives.* Some scholars have put forward three, four, or five constatives in arguing that God does not exist. However, that of Oduwole shall be used in this paper. Her argument on the problem of evil (2007, 2) is put as follows:

1. God exists.
2. God is omnipotent—all-powerful, capable of performing any act, even those that violate natural laws.
3. God is omniscient—all-knowing, continuously aware of everything on earth.
4. God is all omnibeneficent—wholly good, holy, loving, absolutely righteous.
5. Evil existS.

These five constatives can be meaningfully reduced to three:

- i. God exists.
- ii. God has infinite and perfect attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, etc.
- iii. Evil exists.

These three are logically incompatible with one another. This is because their conjunction is logically contradictory. It is this very contradiction involved in the above constatives (i-iii) that constitutes the metaphysical problem of evil.

Constatives 2, 3, and 4, if jointly taken, and evil exists (as in constative 5), then the conjunction appears incompatible with each other. If God exists and He is infinitely good and powerful, and if this world is actually created by him, it is impossible to understand why there could be so much evil in it. Why does evil exist? The two constatives seem difficult to reconcile. The existence of an all powerful, omniscient, holy God implies, as it is argued in Western philosophy, that either (1) God does not exist, (2) He does exist, but not omnipotent, or (3) He exists but not wholly good. So the problem is which relevant constative should we abandon?

Various attempts have been made by philosophers and theologians to explain the apparent contradiction between God's attributes and the existence of evil in the world. Epicurus long ago, writes J. O. Omoregbe (1993, 134), put this problem in the form of a dilemma: "Is God able to prevent evil in the world but is unwilling to do so? Then He is not infinitely good; on the contrary, he is malevolent. Is he willing to prevent evil but is unable to do so? Then He is not omnipotent; He is, on the contrary, impotent. But, if He is both able and willing to prevent evil (if He is both omnipotent and infinitely good), why is there evil in the world created by him?" Being embittered about this imperfect world, Bertrand Russell (1957, 32) asserts that God deserves no handshake for leaving the world as it is after millions of years of trial and error.

Gottfried von Leibniz says that God was expected with all his all-claimed power, goodness, and knowledge to have chosen the best of all possible worlds and created this world. But the evident existence of evil in the world tends to denigrate the consistency of the supposed God's attributes. Leibniz (2002, 118-119) expresses his concern of the problem thus:

Whoever does not choose the best course is lacking either in power, or knowledge, or goodness. God did not choose the best course in creating the world; therefore, God was lacking in power, or knowledge or goodness.

That evil exists in the world further gains the attention of the empiricist philosopher, David Hume. Hume could not comprehend the moral attributes of God with the existence of evil. He (1973, 186) writes:

...after these reflections, and infinitely more, which might be suggested, you can still preserve in your Anthropomorphism, and assert the moral attributes of the Deity, his justice, benevolence, mercy and rectitude, to be of the same nature with these virtues in human creatures?

In the above excerpt, Hume was skeptical of whether virtuous attributes of man anthropomorphized for God can augur well with God's own intentions. Hume is emphatic on the dissimilarities of these attributes. He (1973, 186) further argues:

His power we allow is infinite: whatever He wills is executed: but neither man nor any other animal is happy: therefore He does not will their happiness. His wisdom is infinite: He is never mistaken in choosing the means to an end: but the course of nature tends not to human or animal felicity; therefore it is not established for that purpose. Through the whole compass of human knowledge, there are no inferences more certain and infallible than these. In what respect, then, do His benevolence and mercy resemble the benevolence and mercy of men?

The point of Hume is that as long as we conceive God anthropomorphically as an infinitely loving, merciful, knowing, and powerful father, the problem of evil will continue to arise. This is because it is contradictory for such a being to allow his creatures to be afflicted with so much evil when He could have prevented it since He is all powerful. Hence, the idea of infinitely anthropomorphic attributes, Hume concludes, does not resemble and is irreconcilable with the presence of evil in the world.

Having clarified the meaning of evil and what constitutes the problem of evil, an elucidation of the proposed theodicy and their consequent failures is important before discussing some of the various types of evil in Yoruba worldview.

THEODICY

Theodicy means the attempted solutions to the problem of evil (Omoregbe 1993, 128). Right from the inception of this problem, several solutions have been proffered by theists and several scholars. Stoicism, in its pantheistic philosophical worldview, argues that there is really no evil in the world since everything is part of God and every event is part of the ways in which God orders the world through the laws of nature. All that we call evil are an integral part of the eternal plan and working towards the harmony of the universal system.

Spinoza, for instance, argues along with stoicism when he says that all actions and all events in the universe are the self expressions of God; hence, nothing is really evil. For Spinoza (see Omoregbe 1993, 130), the idea of evil is due to man's inadequate knowledge about the world. It is, however, doubtful to accept this pantheistic metaphysical conclusion as the correct portrait of reality.

For Plotinus and St. Augustine, evil is not a positive thing; it is not an entity, but the privation of beings. As long as man is attached to material things, there shall be evil. Plotinus, therefore, recommends self-detachment and asceticism from material things. St. Augustine notes that evil is not a substance, but only a negation of being. Hence, it makes no sense to ask who creates it. Evil is not created and could not be created. It cannot exist on its own; hence, there is nothing completely evil. All that is created by God is good. However, contrary to these views expressed by Plotinus and St. Augustine, we do know that evil is much more than a mere negation or privation of being. Plotinus's and Augustine's explanation left unanswered the question, should there be evil in the structure of the world? Leibnitz's idea of "necessary evils" as part of the best of all possible worlds did not sit well with philosophers after him.

In addition to the above theodicy, there are also religious answers to the problem of evil. Hinduism claims that evil is an illusion or "Maya." Both Hinduism and Buddhism agree that evil can be avoided because it is attachment to material things that is the cause of evil. But such explanations leave unexplained the presence of natural evils such as earthquakes, disasters, etc. Hence, the explanations are not satisfactory. In fact, in reality asceticism is not a guarantee of an evil-free life.

The Islamic explanation is that God (Allah) is the absolute creator and everything is under his sovereign control, inclusive of evil. According to Islam, God allows evil to afflict men in order to test their faith in him or to punish them for their sins (see Omoregbe 1993, 147). But, it may be asked, if God is omniscient, then he should know whether an individual has faith in him. In fact, He does not need to test anybody or punish him unnecessarily since He could have known that beforehand.

The theodicy offered by the adherents of Zoroastrianism is a form of dualism between God and evil forces. In such a dualism, the good deity is simply incapable of preventing the other from producing evil in the world. So man should accept his faith on the infinite struggle between good and evil forces. In Judaism and Christianity, the explanation offered for the existence of evil is that God permits evil in order to turn it into good in the end. It is said that evil should be temporarily tolerated in order to be ultimately destroyed. But this position is inconsistent with God's omnipotence, "for it presupposes that it is only via evil that God can bring about the good He wants to turn evil into good" (Omoregbe 1993, 155). Can he not produce the proposed good without first allowing evil to take place?

J. L. Mackie (1971, 97) believes that the denial of two attributes of theistic God will bring about the solution to the problem of evil:

If one is prepared to say that God is not perfectly good, or not quite omnipotent or that evil does not exist or that good is not opposed to the kind of evil that exists or there are limits to what an omnipotent God can do, the problem of evil will not arise for you.

Mackie's options are not realistic and many are hardly ready to take any of his stringent alternatives. While it is evident that none of the above philosophical and religious explanations of evil is satisfactory, the problem of evil in Western discourse, undoubtedly, still persists. However, what is yet to be ascertained and made definite is how this problem has been contextualized in African discourse, and whether it has been resolved or dissolved. In examining this problem, we situate our discourse within the Yoruba cosmological order.

EVIL IN YORUBA CULTURAL MILIEU

Evil is a reality among the Yoruba and it is referred to as *ibi* in their language. The Yoruba consider evil to have two sources—visible and invisible. According to Ade P. Dopamu (2000, p. 29), in most cases "the visible source of evil may be acting through the agency of the invisible source or may be acting in consequence of the invisible source." The visible source is attributable to mankind, while the Yoruba associate the invisible source to *Esu*.

Five different types of evil can be identified in Yoruba: natural or physical evil, spiritual evil, moral evil, social and psychological evil, and intellectual evil. Natural or physical evils are pains and discomforts that arise from natural diseases and calamities. They are events that are beyond human control, events that have to do with natural occurrences. Physical evils include earthquakes, drought, famine, diseases, cyclones, volcanic eruptions, etc. Natural evils can also be the result of human finitude or physical deformities such as being a hunchback, cripple, albino, etc.

Spiritual evils have no physical or primary causes. The Yoruba believe there are malevolent forces in the world whose actions and manipulations are devilish in practical manifestation. Such evils are referred to as the *asasi* (spell), *epe* (curse), *ajalu* (bad mishaps), *arelu* (misfortunes), etc. In all these forms of evil, principalities and unseen powers are believed to be the cause, and they can inflict upon anybody who offended them.

Moral evils are those which result from human choice or volition. Moral evil presupposes human freedom and responsibility. It comprises defects of moral character such as malice, hatred, greed, jealousy, selfishness, cruelty, intemperance, and so on, which tend to cause suffering to other fellow beings. Economic evils such as poverty, corruption, etc. are an extended moral evil because they originate from human freedom and responsibility.

Intellectual evils are caused by perception errors such as stupidity, irrationality, poor judgment, and insanity. Psychological and social evils are anti-social occurrences caused by unhappy events of one's life such as loneliness, frustration, fear, despair in love affairs, death, killing, suicide, etc.

Given the typology of evils in the Yoruba cultural milieu, the people believe that evil can be resisted, at least, in some ways. Dopamu (2009, 43) acknowledges this when he points out that

...humans do not fold their arms and allow evil to befall them. They fight evil, especially the visible and some invisible moral evils. It is in this respect that most of the energy of Christian crusaders, and prayer warriors, is directed against the forces of evil with prayers from the Psalms, while Muslims also read some suras.

While Dopamu's observation can be said to reflect contemporary attitudes towards avoiding the occurrence and, as it were, mitigating the effects of evil in traditional Yoruba culture, evil is fought in quite different ways. Among the Yoruba, there are different types of magic used in fighting evil: *asetaa* (magic to conquer the enemy), *madarikan* (magic against all sorcery attacks), *aforan* (magic used to foil problem or to get out of trouble), *etutu* (sacrifice), etc. The paradox of evil in Yoruba culture lies in its reality, which stares man in the face in spite of the precautionary and curative mechanisms taken by the people.

ESU AND OTHER DIVINITIES IN THE YORUBA PANTHEON

Yoruba cosmology accounts the origin of the universe and the underlying forces behind the occurrence of events in the world. The Yoruba come to believe

that a being must have created the universe greater than man himself. This being the Yoruba calls *Eleda* (creator), *Olorun*, or *Olodumare*. "*Olorun*" means the owner of the heaven and the earth, who exercises enormous power over man and all the objects of his creation. *Olorun* is also known as *Olodumare*, the supreme Deity, the sustainer and upholder of the universe.

Olodumare is very central to the Yoruba worldview (see Sodipo 1973, 13). *Olodumare* or *Eleda* is seen by the Yoruba as the ultimate cause of all visible processes in the world. By being the creator, it does not mean that He unilaterally creates everything without the support of and consultation with other divinities (Balogun 2009, 5). Unlike Christianity which maintains that God created everything in the universe by merely uttering "Let there be..." in six days and rested on the seventh day, *Olodumare* delegated power to some deities in order to accomplish the task of creation. The universe and everything in it were created by the joint efforts of *Olodumare* and his divinities. Thus, while *Olodumare* is the primary cause of events and occurrences, the activities of the lesser gods or divinities (called *Orisas*) constitute the important secondary causes.

These divinities are known as the ministers of *Olodumare*. Some divinities are "ministers" with portfolio while some are without portfolio. *Olodumare* commissions these deities to administer the universe along with Him. The Yoruba do not perceive their divinities as mere illusory beings, but as "real" spiritual beings through which people could have access to the Ultimate Being or *Olodumare*. Bolaji Idowu (1962, 63) comments on this:

We must accept as indisputable the fact that to any believing worshipping mind, the divinities are real, as real as those ministering angels who...have been constant to those who believe in their existence.

Ideally, a mere look at the Yoruba conception of *Olodumare* may seem to liken Him to the Christian Supreme Being, who is all-powerful and infinitely absolute. However, by virtue of conceptual decolonization, the idea of God in the Western sense, is unlike *Olodumare* who works together with other divinities and terrestrial forces to ensure the smooth running of the universe.

Kola Abimbola (2006, 48) argues that "the Yoruba cosmos is divided into two halves: the right hand and the left hand. While about 400 primordial deities occupy the right, about 200 primordial powers occupy the left." To Abimbola, the powers on the right hand are known as *orisa* (*deities*) while the powers on the left hand are called *ajogun* (anti-gods). He observes that while the *orisa* are *benevolent*, they are also capable of doing evil; the powers on the left are irredeemably malevolent. Writing on the deities, E. A. Odumuyiwa (1997, 299) remarks: "It is the deities who control the universe, in all circumstances of life, all its changing scenes, its joys and sorrows."

Each one of them, according to Oguntola (2000, 16), "has wielded power in his or her own area of competence and jurisdiction. They act as agents of social control and by which conduct of individuals and the community is regulated. This they did in conjunction with *Olodumare*. Thus, we can say that there is a sort of harmonious interaction between *Olodumare* and his ministers. Writing generally on the concept of God, G. S. Sogolo (1983, 14) maintains that:

He knows more than we do, but unlike the Christian God, He does not know everything. He is more powerful than we are but He is not all-powerful. God, in Africa, is more benevolent than we are but He too can do evil and therefore not omni-benevolent. In short, God in African Religion is not transcendental.

The upshot of the above excerpt is that any attempt to depict the Yoruba supreme deity, *Olodumare*, as having the same attributes with the Christian God will be a conceptual mistake. In other words, any effort to describe *Olodumare* as a being who is omnipotent, omnibenevolent, or omniscient will amount to nothing but super imposition of an alien category on traditional Yoruba thought. In the words of Kwasi Wiredu (1995, 22), it will result into another mental colonization.

At this junction, let us now initiate a discussion about the divinities. First in our consideration is *Orisanla*. He is sometimes called *Obatala*. This deity is referred to as the *arch divinity* to whom *Olodumare* gives the prerogative to create things as he chooses. As a sculptor, he makes man of either normal shape or deformed shape. The hunchback, the cripple, the albino, etc., are symbols of his authority, either signifying his displeasure for the breach of some taboo or evidence of his capacity to do as he chooses. As a further mark of His non-absolute power, *Olodumare* commissions *Obatala* in fabricating the different elements of the human body. Thereof, he transfers the lifeless human bodies to *Olodumare*, who imbues them with souls or what the Yoruba call *emi*.

Orunmila is another divinity that assists *Olodumare* in matters pertaining to omniscience and wisdom. He is the *oracle divinity*. "*Orunmila*" means *Orun-l-o-mo-a-ti-la* (only heaven knows the means of salvation). He possesses intimate knowledge of matters affecting human destiny. *Orunmila* is capable of predicting future events as well as prescribing remedies for any eventuality. This accounts for why *Ifa* priests, who are *Orunmila's* agents, are usually consulted for necessary guidance during times of important decisions (Idowu 1962, 50).

Esu is another Yoruba divinity who works hand in hand with other divinities in the creation and administration of the universe. *Esu*, according to Idowu (1962, 50), is a deity of versatile character. He is primarily a special Public Relations Officer who links heavens and earth. As the divine messenger, he works also in the capacity of an Inspector General of Police, to use the modern usage of the term. As an Inspector General of Police, *Esu* reports regularly to *Olodumare* the deeds of other divinities and men; he regularly ensures that proper procedures are followed in matters of worship and sacrifices. In his official capacity, *Esu* sees that sacrifices reach the designated deity and ensures that supplicants' requests are stamped by the divinity concerned and, finally, by *Olodumare*. J. O. Sodipo (1973, 15) explains additionally that *Esu* ensures that punishment is carried out on offenders. In the opinion of Kola Abimbola (2007, 15), *Esu* is "a neutral element in the sense that he is neither good nor bad. He is simply the mediator between all the entities and forces on both sides of the right and left divide."

The above goes to show that *Esu* is an important figure in Yoruba cosmology; he occupies a significant place in the process of divination and sacrifices. Being a divine messenger, he possesses the *ase* (power) needed by both the living and the deities in

accomplishing their aspirations. *Esu* is the only deity that unifies opposite worlds such as those of secrecy and revelation, injustice and justice, sacredness and profanity, etc. His central and referred position in the Yoruba pantheon accounts for why his shrine is always found at the entry points of every Yoruba community or town.

Caution needs to be taken at this juncture not to equate *Esu* in traditional Yoruba thought with the Biblical or the Quranic Satan. It is fashionable in contemporary African discourse to interpret the Yoruba notion of *Esu* as the Western and Arabian concept of the devil. This tendency is commonly widespread because of the proliferation and overwhelming influence of Christianity and Islam in contemporary African life. Such temptation is erroneous and should be resisted. Idowu (1962, 80) writes:

Esu has often been sweepingly called either the 'Devil' or 'Satan'. He is certainly not the Devil of our New Testament acquaintance, who is an out and out evil power in opposition to the plan of God's salvation of man. On the whole, it would be near the truth to parallel him with Satan in the book of Job, where the Satan is one of the ministers of God and has the office of trying men's sincerity and putting their religion to the proof.

When decolonized from alien conceptualization, the concept of *Esu* is not a similitude of "Satan" or "Devil" in Western and Arabian understanding. Unlike the view where Satan is an all-evil personality, *Esu* is not altogether evil but has also the ability to do good. *Esu* is not a rival of *Olodumare*, but works in harmony with Him to ensure order in the world. In fact, he occupies a special place in Yoruba cosmology looking at the affairs of men and the divinities and this perhaps accounts for why the adherents of Yoruba traditional religion seek his protective and benevolent powers by worshiping him.

Ogun is another important divinity. He is usually accorded great honor as the divinity of iron, steel, and war, among other divinities. The fear of incurring *Ogun's* wrath makes devotees to handle with care metal tools and things made of iron like knives, cutlasses, automobile engines, etc.

The divinities discussed so far directly derive their power and authority from *Olodumare* and, hence, are referred to as primordial deities.

In addition to them, we have the deified divinities. This category includes *Sango*, *Oya*, *Sanpona*, etc., who are cultural heroes that once lived mysterious lives while on earthly existence. Take, for instance, the highly feared and dreaded "Sango," otherwise known as the god of thunder and lightning, who is in charge of the moral aspect of life. Anybody who is morally defiant to God's law and the community spirit is susceptible to incur *Sango's* wrath. All these divinities—both primordial and deified—are important causal factors in the explanation of evilness and goodness in the Yoruba worldview.

PROBLEM OF EVIL: A YORUBA-AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Having explained the nature of *Esu* and other divinities in Yoruba cosmology, our next question is: Does the philosophical problem of evil exist in the Yoruba

tradition? The best way to confront this problem is to revisit the core of the problem as earlier discussed. This will help us to know or perhaps intuit whether this problem is language-neutral, culture-specific, universal, or none at all.

The claim that the problem of evil is universal has been presented by Oduwole. According to her (2007, 4):

...the philosophical problem of evil is a universal one. Regardless of race, culture or tradition, as long as one believes in a supreme or ultimate Being...and as long as we accept that evil is not an illusion, the problem exists. However, the various attempts to justify God in the face of evil differ.

We do not quite agree with Oduwole's categorical position that the problem of evil is indeed a universal issue in all metaphysical systems regardless of culture or tradition. While there is the existence of evil in African thought like anywhere else in the world, this does not necessarily lead to the philosophical problem of evil in Yoruba thinking.

Let us reexamine the three constatives that form the core of this problem in philosophy:

- i. God exists.
- ii. God has infinite and perfect attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, etc.
- iii. Evil exists.

As noted earlier, the problem of evil is occasioned by the contradiction involved in these three constatives. In order to know whether the problem exists in the Yoruba-African philosophical thought, the contradiction must equally and necessarily be re-established. But if there is no contradiction or inconsistency involved in the analysis, then the philosophical problem of evil does not exist in Yoruba thought.

Having decolonized conceptually the idea of God in Yoruba belief system, it is now evident that it is conceptually wrong to refer to *Olodumare* as God in Western tradition because they do not have the same attributes. Hence, in our attempt to restate the philosophical problem of evil, the concept God shall be avoided; instead, we shall use *Olodumare* henceforth. The usage of the concept of "evil" shall continue because to the Yoruba, "evil" means "*ibi*," that is, something calamitous and hurtful. Hence, the concept has an equivalent meaning as it is in the English language.

In the light of the above, let us now restate the problem in an African perspective and test its logical consistency.

- i *Olodumare* exists.
- ii Evil exists.
- iii. *Olodumare* has infinite and perfect attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, etc.

From the above, constative (i) is incontrovertible among the Yoruba because the existence of *Olodumare* is a stark reality to them. He is, in fact, central to their worldview. For constative (ii), it is equally existentially true among the Yoruba that evil exists. They believe in evil as well as the various forces and principalities dispensing evil in the world. The Yoruba even share the classification of evil into different categories as stated earlier: natural, spiritual, moral, intellectual, and psychological evil. Sophie Oluwole (1995, 18) underscores the existential reality and acknowledgment of the existence of evil in Yoruba thought in her submission that:

Instead of trying to deny the existence of evil as many Western thinkers have done, the Yoruba sage neither regards God as the creator of the world nor as a perfect Being. The Yoruba God asks some questions and acknowledges the place of a new knowledge.

The import of the above excerpt is that constative (iii) is not logically true, and it is a false belief among the Yoruba. For them, *Olodumare* does not have the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, and infinite goodness, etc., as we have it in Western philosophical tradition. To describe *Olodumare* in that way is to robe Him with Hellenic garments (Bitek 1970, 46).

Following the above analysis, it is evident that if constative (iii) is false, then the contradiction of the three constatives is disarmed. Hence, there is no philosophical problem of evil in Yoruba metaphysical thought. This perennial problem in Western philosophy is nonproblematic in Yoruba thought. The problem of evil arises as the result of ascribing to God such attributes as omnibenevolence, omniscience, and omnipotence—attributes which make it difficult to reconcile the goodness of God with the evil we have in the world. The problem of evil does not therefore exist in Yoruba thought because *Olodumare* and his divinities are said to be capable of doing both good and bad. Unlike the Supreme Being of the Christian religion, *Olodumare* and the other gods are never regarded as perfect beings that cannot be malevolent.

Oduwole's position that the problem of evil is universal and that in the Yoruba philosophical thought, there cannot be an exemption is problematic. The problem in her analysis stems from her false conception of *Olodumare* as a Being that has absolute and incomparable authority over the world and that He is absolutely perfect in superlative qualities (as we have in Christianity and Islam). This conception of *Olodumare*, which she shares with the early religious anthropological scholars in Yoruba (such as Bolaji, Awolalu, and Dopamu), is misrepresented. The early scholars reacted to the ethnocentric charge of paganism, which Western ethnocentric scholars ascribed to African traditional religion. They became privy to the quixotic intellectual quest to explain away paganism and to fulfill the vision of establishing a religious identity for the Yoruba that is not inferior to alien religions. While these early attempts are commendable as trailblazers in their own regard, it is pertinent at this point of scholarship in Africa to start avoiding the erroneous intellectual presentations of the religious beliefs and identity of the Yoruba-Africans.

One implication of our analysis on *Olodumare*, *Esu*, and other divinities is the temptation to argue that the existence of evil does not in any way expunge the proof

of His existence whatsoever, and that *Olodumare* can be philosophically defended from some types of evil. One may argue that *Olodumare* can be exonerated from being responsible for some forms of evil: social and psychological evil, moral evil, and intellectual evil. These evils are man-made—products of human actions through freedom, choice, and responsibility. However, *Olodumare* and the coterie of divinities are blameworthy and cannot be rationally defended in the face of physical and spiritual evils. This is because these evils are beyond human control and they are divine-made.

While the above position can be seen as a better explanation towards resolving the ageless philosophical problem of evil, nonetheless such a position raises the further metaphysical issues beyond the traditional problem of evil: Why did *Olodumare* create a world with the intermediary support from divinities and allow them to have so much power and unrestricted freedom and exercise of principalities to cause evil in the world? Why has *Olodumare* not created human beings in a way that the exercise of their freedom will not occasion evil at all? Why has *Olodumare* decided to introduce the concept of evil to human experience and language?

While answers to these fundamental questions are important for future consideration, it is crucial at this juncture to examine Oduwole's analysis of Yoruba theodicy, which she philosophically interprets as being dialectical in nature. According to her (2007, 8):

The Yoruba hold strongly a dialectical principle of *Ibi* and *Ire* in the affairs of men and the world at large. They conceive of an essential contradiction or dialectical process between *Ire* (goodness) and *Ibi* (evilness). This explains the dimensions of the pain and pleasure principle and the problem of evil. It is assumed that these two principles, *Ire* and *Ibi*, are coexisting opposites. *Ire* is composed of the good things in life, such as pleasure, sweetness, prosperity, joy, fame and prestige; while *Ibi* has to do with the unpleasant side of life, such as pain, bitterness, poverty, poor health, famine, war, and destruction. These two opposites, according to the Yoruba, co-exist *ejiwapo*, that is, it is rightly assumed that one cannot be without the other. They complement each other.

In establishing the above dialectical thesis of goodness and evilness in Yoruba worldview, Oduwole cites some texts from the chapters of *Ifa* literary corpus: *Osa-Alwure*, *Iwori-Ose*, and *Irosu-Iwori*.

What we find problematic in the above is not the text cited, but the philosophical interpretation given to the text. The central point in all the chapters of *Ifa* cited by Oduwole is: *Tibi tire ni adaniwaye da ile aye* ("It was with both evil and good that the creator created the world") and *Tibi tire ni eda nri ni ile aye* ("Man lives with evil and goodness in the world"). A clarification of the concept "dialectics" may lead us to the problem with the dialectical interpretation offered by Oduwole.

While there are diverse conceptual interpretations and understanding of dialectics in philosophical history, its etymological meaning is clear. "Dialectics" is coined from two Greek words—*dia* and *legia*—meaning discourse, an art of conversation (Runes 1976, 78). On a general note, dialectics can be defined as the

act of holding a conversation with the aim of arriving at the truth through a conflict of different opinions (Kirilenco and Korshinova (1989, 101). When applied to the context of evilness and goodness in Yoruba metaphysics, Oduwole says that both *Ire* (goodness) and *Ibi*, (evilness) are coexisting opposites. However, a fundamental presupposition of two things that are considered to be dialectical to each other is that they will have parallel existence. This is quite true even in the Hegelian triadic dialectics where there is a movement from the thesis to antithesis and finally to synthesis, after which the synthesis becomes a new thesis and this process continues until it ends in the Absolute Idea. Understood in this sense, the coexistence of *ire* and *ibi* cannot be dialectical, since for the Yoruba, both *ire* and *ibi* are not separated as two distinct realities, but rather seen as one of two sides.

It is on this basis that we think it is more correct to interpret the Yoruba cultural understanding of *ire* and *ibi* as binary rather than dialectical. It is within this context that the very concept of *ejiwapo* that Oduwole mentions can meaningfully be understood. The metaphysical structure of the Yoruba nature of reality falls within the binary conceptual scheme. In this new interpretation, both *ire* and *ibi* are not separate entities but one entity in two interdependent folds. This is incontrovertible because for the Yoruba, there is evilness in goodness and goodness in evilness. Both are two sides of the same coin. The Yoruba proverbs, which say that "*inu ikoko dudu, leko funfun ti jade*" ("it is out of the black pot that the white maize pap comes out") and "*ire wa ninu ibi*" ("there is goodness in evilness") are metaphorical of the point that both goodness and evilness constitute an inseparable pair.

CONCLUSION

The intellectual call of Oduwole in her article for further academic research on the concepts of "*Esu*" and the "Devil" and of "God" and "*Olodumare*" respectively has given birth to this paper. Side by side with Oduwole's call is Wiredu's call for the urgent need to conceptually decolonize foreign assimilated conceptual schemes in future African philosophical interpretations. The discussions thus far in this paper have been in consonance with those calls.

Unlike Oduwole's universalist position on the problem of evil, we have established that the philosophical problem of evil does not exist in traditional Yoruba thought. The nonexistence of the problem does not imply the nonexistence or nonrecognition of evil. In fact, for the Yoruba, the reality of evil is indisputable. However, the Yoruba believe that evilness is the complement of goodness in a binary structure. Hence, both coexist in a nondualistic framework.

Oduwole's philosophical interpretation of evilness and goodness as dialectical appears inaccurate. We also differ from her on the view that all types of evil (moral, physical/natural, spiritual, psychological/social, or intellectual) are manifestations of the deities and machinations of evil forces in Yoruba cosmology. It is more correct to say that *Olodumare* and His divinities are to be blamed for the existence of physical and spiritual evils in the world while they can be conditionally vindicated from being the cause of moral, social/psychological, and intellectual evils. The former are beyond while the latter are within human control.

NOTE

*Rolando Gripaldo (2010, 72-81; 2011, 87-75) rejects the “proposition” and replaces it with the “constative,” which is an utterance or sentence—either spoken or written—that is true or false.

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THE SKEPTIC'S PASSION

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This paper aims at understanding the condition of the skeptic as skeptical. Using the mechanism of cognition argued by Aquinas, which explains how cognitions are connected with dispositions and affections, it tries to unlock the skeptic's disposition to doubt as something willed. Culling insights from Wittgenstein, this essay points to certainty as a necessity for the person who wishes to live without the constant apprehension of doubt and pervasive suspicion of others. It concludes with an analysis of the skeptic's need for trust as a willingness to open oneself dynamically in self-giving and submission to others, requiring that one give up self-sufficiency.

INTRODUCTION

In one of Plato's (2002) dialogues, Meno—who hails from one of the leading aristocratic families in Thessaly—wants to know Socrates' position on the much-debated question whether virtue can be taught, or whether it comes rather by practice, or is acquired by one's birth and nature, or in some other way. Having determined that Meno does not know what virtue is, and recognizing that he himself does not know either, Socrates has proposed to him that they inquire into this together. Socrates then questions Meno's slave about a problem in geometry. Socrates is trying to get somewhere. He is not proceeding blindly. With Socrates' methodical questioning, the slave (who has never studied geometry before) comes to see for himself, to recognize, what the right answer to the geometrical problem must be. The slave is able to "recollect" this prior knowledge, not knowing new conclusions from data being presented to him for the first time. The examination of the slave assuages Meno's doubt about the possibility of such inquiry. He and Socrates proceed to inquire together what virtue is. We can deduce from the dialogue that in philosophical inquiry, there is hope, that if we question ourselves rightly, we can progressively improve our understanding of what virtue is and eventually lead us to the full knowledge of it. This presupposes that the inquirer wishes and desires to arrive at full knowledge or at certitude. As Socrates suggests, doubting is the first step of inquiry. My own contention is that doubting can be resolved, but only when an individual seeks in a certain way. Cicero (Vatican II 1965, 2) says, "By doubting we come at the truth," and truth is the object of human reasoning, the "rational expression of knowledge" to which man is impelled by his nature to seek and possess. If the

person, however, inquires in a manner that he will arrive at uncertainty, he will not know anything with definiteness.

PROBLEM OF SKEPTICISM

Perplexity oftentimes is the initial condition of the skeptic. But at bottom, by his questioning, we notice that the fundamental concern of the perplexed is to arrive at certainty. After all, it is by a desire to know the ultimate truth of existence that human beings come to discover the universal elements of knowledge which enable them to understand man as a person, to comprehend the world, and to make progress in their own self-realization. The question is can man know in an absolute fashion in a manner as to end all doubts?

Whereas perplexity prods one to search for answers to questions, it is certainty that gives assurance of being hinged on firm ground, of not being shaken out of balance, of breaking free from an uncomfortable state of loss. To use a parallelism, unless one is sure of where he is going, he moves about like a blind man bound to stumble and fall. The blind man may have some certainties: in this place familiar to me, I can help myself, he says, but I am absolutely limited to my own experience there. Once he traverses a foreign terrain, he is completely lost. Unless he entrusts himself to a guide to lead the way for him, he will remain in the anxiety of darkness. In entrusting himself, he must not refuse to be led; he must go along with the person directing him. Any resistance would only be asserting self-reliance where, in reality, there is none.

This paper attempts to understand the problem of skepticism and to point out why certainty is important in life. It tries to comprehend why skeptics are skeptical. This essay argues that the skeptic doubts that it is possible to know and arrive at knowledge and truth with certainty, not so much because he is plagued by doubt, as he is *disposed not* to arrive at certainty. I will endeavor to show that the skeptic *wills* his situation. I will argue this by examining the mechanism of cognition as laid down by Aquinas, of how we arrive at knowledge, and explain how cognitions are connected with our dispositions. Drawing out insights from Wittgenstein's *On certainty* (1969-75), I will discuss the primordial importance of trust as a solution to skepticism, linking this idea to the Thomistic notion of disposition as affecting our cognition.

Using the Thomistic thesis (1947, I-II, q.84, a.1), "The received is in the receiver according to the mode of the receiver" (*receptum est in recipiente per modum recipientis*), the knower must form a likeness with the thing known, we deduce that likeness (*similitudo*) between the liker and the liked is attained only when the receiver forms a certain likeness of the object in himself. In other words, the *subject of cognition must change its way of being* to form that *likeness* of the object (Suto 2004, 61). This implies the receiver wanting the object of cognition. Our cognitions then depend upon our dispositions (in Wittgensteinian thinking, our attitudes). In many ways, we tend to justify our beliefs with our inclinations and affections. This thinking shows that our cognitions are strongly connected with our passions. We know that which we feel passionate for. We form a likeness with that to which we have inclinations. In the language of Aquinas, the knower loves or has connaturality

or inclination to the thing desired. "Love implies a certain connaturality of the appetite with the good loved" (Aquinas 1964, 135). Using this train of reasoning to explain the condition of the skeptic, we might say the skeptic is in love with doubting; in doubting, he perceives uncertainty as a good. That this has important implications is not to be overlooked together with stressing the importance of certainty as a better good, a notion expressed as a quality possessed by reasonable persons in Wittgensteinian thinking.

WHAT IS SKEPTICISM?

Skepticism is the view that holds that nothing can be known with certainty. Its etymology is the Greek *skeptomai* which means "to look carefully, to reflect, to inquire." As a philosophical system, it originated in Greece, in the middle of the fourth century B.C. Pyrrho of Elis (310-270 B.C.) is reported to be the first great skeptical philosopher of the ancient world. He traveled with Alexander the Great as court philosopher, then returned home to teach. Pyrrho believed that we should always be quick to question, and slow to believe. Pyrrho was known for presenting philosophy as a way of life that aims at calmness of spirit and happiness of heart. He believed that he, too, easily became convinced of things that trouble the minds and disturb the souls. So he taught that one should withhold judgment as much as possible.

The skeptic has simple questions to ask us. He asks about the reliability of the sources of our beliefs concerning things past, present, and future. There are two main traditions in epistemological skepticism. One tradition makes the claim that nobody ever knows or can know anything. This claim is also given the names Cartesian Skepticism or Academic Skepticism (of the skeptics in the ancient Academy in Greece). It is also called dogmatic skepticism because such skeptics dogmatically assert a universal claim. The other kind is Moral Skepticism (2006), a kind of skepticism that raises doubt about moral knowledge or justified moral belief.

Skepticism and its derivatives are based on two principles: one, that there is no such thing as a certainty in knowledge, and two, that all human knowledge is only probably true, or true most of the time, or not true at all.

Describing what goes on in the mind of the skeptic, Wittgenstein (1969-75, 253) writes, "At the foundation of a well-founded belief lies the belief that it is not founded," says the skeptic. Skeptical inquiry resonates doubt. It resists persuasion and refuses a prodding to the truth with evidences and facts. "Skepticism is, one might say, a rationalized expression of a kind of deafness to the human world" (Minar 2004, 220). The skeptic is not interested to hear what explanations can be given to a problem. Not concerned about resolving doubt, the skeptic resists the persuasion to answers that are there, that could be verified further if he embarks on his own investigation. He simply wants to show that we are less certain or more prone to error about all the particulars than we tend to think. He instead makes it known that if his doubts are legitimate, and if we make generalizations from his manner of doubting in the way he anticipates, then it shows that we lack the basis for our professed beliefs. He is unable to trust. The skeptic, writes Minar (2004, 222),

...questions, for example, whether behavior gives us *any* reason for believing *anything* about other minds. On the skeptic's view then, we have no access to facts about an entire aspect of human experience, no idea of the actual layout of a, for all we know, wholly fantastical realm. Our loss is somehow more than a *diminishment of the information about the world we have at our disposal*; the picture of our condition with which the skeptic leaves us is not one of chronic intellectual carelessness, but rather, of *perpetual cognitive confinement*. Our *sloppiness about what we should believe*, whatever its extent, is a fact of life that we can hope, if not exactly rectify, to manage. The skeptic, on the other hand, takes himself to discover something both earthshaking and irremediable about our unreflective confidence in our ability to acquire any well-founded beliefs in the first place. [Emphasis mine.]

We notice that the skeptic leans towards a kind of intellectual scrupulousness, yet the very standards and procedures he employs aim at rejecting every analysis of knowledge that can possibly be used, thereby leading to unacceptable conclusions about his concerns and about the world.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CERTAINTY

For Wittgenstein, the general characteristics of certainty are as follows: First, certainty is the substructure deeply imbedded in the person's thoughts and actions, the riverbed of thoughts, the hinge upon which our reasoning revolves; they are beliefs that show in our actions. Wittgenstein (1969-75, 277, 395, 510-11) writes, "...certainty shows itself in what we *do*; it will, he says, 'come out in the way I speak about the things in question'." He explains further, "It is like directly taking hold of something, as I take hold of my towel without having doubts. And yet this taking-hold corresponds to *sureness*, not to a knowing. But don't I take hold of a thing's name like that too? Second, Wittgenstein's certainty is intuitively assured as opposed to a certainty bound by evidence. It is a belief "I can't help believing" such that it is difficult to believe quite the contrary. Wittgenstein (1969-75, 93) goes on:

The propositions presenting what Moore '*knows*' are all of such a kind that it is difficult to imagine *why* anyone should believe the contrary. E.g., the proposition that Moore has spent his whole life in close proximity to the earth. Once more I can speak of myself here instead of speaking of Moore. What could induce me to believe the opposite? Either a memory, or having been told. Everything that I have seen or heard gives me the conviction that no man has ever been far from the earth. Nothing in my picture of the world speaks in favour of the opposite.

So assured is this certainty that it is silly for the one in possession of it to ask for a warrant. The warrant or proof must be more certain than what you are trying to prove as for example in the claim, "I am certain of my existence." One is so assured that it is an aberration for someone to doubt that certainty. It is a certainty

that cannot be undermined without causing a radical disruption in one's belief system and in one's behavior for that matter. It is a certainty shared by all sane and reasonable persons. Certainty furthermore refers to generally applicable propositions for which each person is certain for himself, such as person-specific propositions like "You remember your birthday and your name." There cannot be any doubt about it for me as a reasonable person. "That's it." The reasonable man does *not have* certain doubts (see Wittgenstein 1969-75, 219-20).

Why is certainty important? No one wants to be going through life with the constant apprehension, anxiety, and fear that doubt, incertitude, and deceit bring with them. Uncertainty paralyzes and confuses. Certainty, on the other hand, enlightens man's intelligence and shapes his freedom. It makes him know which way to act, what to choose, which way to go. It is innate in man to desire to enjoy the use of his own free and clear judgment to decide on his actions responsibly, without external pressure or coercion coming from fears arising from uncertainty. No one wants to regret having to make mistakes because he acted out of doubt.

It belongs to man's nature to search for definitive answers, primarily to the meaning of life itself, secondarily to all empirical and scientific phenomena that can be explained. Moreover, it also belongs to man's nature to seek an absolute answer that might give meaning to all his searching. If that search, to start with, were to be completely futile and hopeless, man would not even begin to yearn for something that in the end would be totally beyond his knowing. Only the sense that he can reach an answer prods him onto this initial step of searching. In the course of searching, rightly will he say that he has not stumbled upon a satisfactory answer. He will only go on seeking for answers again, because it is natural for him to seek for something ultimate, which might serve as a basis for all things, if but for him to be satisfied so as not to ask on and on. In other words, there must be a "final explanation, a supreme value, which refers to nothing beyond itself and which puts an end to all questioning" (John Paul II 1998, no. 27). Otherwise, how can personal existence be anchored on anything at all if man has no certainty as to a truth that could be recognized as final, a truth that confers certitude no longer open to doubt? Even the fact that I know that I doubt is certain and confirms that I can think, a quality of my rational nature. Animals do not doubt. It belongs to human nature to doubt and to arrive at cognition with certainty. In the language of Wittgenstein, it pertains to man's form of life to doubt, to ask, to know. For Aquinas, man's rational nature is such that he has both the inclination and the aptitude to know all that can be known to the extent that his reasoning powers can allow him (given proofs, evidence, empirical data). And as for truths beyond his reasoning capacity, he can only know with certainty, based on the authority of he who reveals them, that is, if he believes in their authority. Belief, however, presupposes trust.

What does it take to believe? It takes evidential certainty, but evidence, at times, is something we are unable to produce ourselves. Thus believing requires entrusting ourselves to the knowledge, proofs, and evidences obtained by other people, through their own investigation and research. I may not have examined if "the earth is round" myself, but I do trust the authority of those who say so. I may investigate the matter myself, make a trip around the world, measure its circumference, but I have better things to do. And if I did embark on such an

exploration, I would at least be able to personally confirm the findings and claims that the earth is truly round. Obviously the knowledge acquired through belief is second-hand knowledge; it could be improved with personal gathering of data, documentation, and verification. But for the most of scientific phenomena, we simply believe on the basis of trust and confidence in the experts themselves, as we may not have the resources to embark on experimentation or research on our own. I do not have the resources to go to the moon, but I take on the findings of the astronauts who had gone to the moon as true. At times, we simply have the empirical evidence before us. To doubt that I am holding a tomato, for instance, has no practical consequence. What do I benefit from doubting that what I hold might just be the stuff of redness and that five minutes from now, it might no longer be the same tomato that I had earlier? What do I benefit from doubting my own identity? On doubting one's name for instance, Wittgenstein (1969-75, 490) has this to say, "When I ask 'Do I know or do I only believe that I am called...?' it is no use to look within myself...not only do I never have the slightest doubt that I am called that, but there is no judgment that I could be certain of if I started doubting about that." For Wittgenstein, all these are idle talk, a kind of madness, of being unhinged from what we are, from our form of life.¹ Thus he says, skepticism can be likened to a disease that needs to be addressed with therapy. To quote him (1969-75, 672; see Wright 2002, 39):

To doubt that I rightly take my name to be 'Crispin Wright' would have the effect of putting in jeopardy the amount of what I normally take for granted about myself—how could I be mistaken about my name unless I am mistaken about enormously much else besides? A shadow could be cast over all of the large framework of personal beliefs in which my life—my history family and projects—are defined for me, and thereby implicitly all over all the routine empirical means by which I have arrived at them and had them reinforced on countless occasions. But *this* is true of some contextually acquired certainties as well: how could I be mistaken about the correctness of this calculation (after I have checked and double-checked it, asked you to do the same, and so on) without calling into question the reliability of my best methods of checking such things and indeed my sense and faculties in general?

If I don't trust *this* evidence, why should I trust *any* evidence?

Wittgenstein's point is there are things that ought not to be doubted. There are things that are self-evident and do not need proof, writes Aquinas. To say I have two hands and having to wave one's hands (as George Edward Moore did in one of his lectures)² is aberrant talk, stressed Wittgenstein, like philosophical madness that can be likened to insanity. The skeptical mind is like a mad mind, fallen into solipsism, alienated, and isolated from other minds,³ insisting that we have no access to other minds, so we have grounds for being skeptical. The skeptic admits of no possibility of having knowledge of the minds of others. As regards pain, for instance, the skeptic will think that the presence of the behavioral criteria taken to be definitive of pain (e.g., squirming, writhing from hyperacidity aches) leaves open the question

of whether the pain itself is really there; for the skeptic, the other might just, for all he knows, be pretending to be in pain (Heal 2005, 224). Commenting on the skeptic's problem about recognizing that persons have minds of their own, Cavell (1979, 432; see Heal 2004, 234) writes:

There is nothing about other minds that satisfies me for *all* (practical) purposes; I already know everything scepticism concludes, that my ignorance of the existence of others is not the fate of my natural condition as a human knower, but my way of inhabiting that condition; that I cannot close my eyes to my doubts of others and to their doubts and denials of me, that my relations with others are restricted, that I cannot *trust them*....

In the end, the skeptic, in not overcoming his doubts about the others' capacity to be known, fails to know them. For instance, he could argue as follows:

Claim: A: B is angry.

Request for basis: How do you know?

Basis: From how he is acting, from his behavior.

Ground for doubt: He might exhibit all these things and not be angry. He might be pretending; you might be misreading his expressions. For all you know, he is feeling something very different, or for that matter nothing.

Conclusion (reached if the ground for doubt cannot be countered): *I don't know*.

Moral: *I never know*. His behavior is not an adequate basis for my knowledge. After all, behavior is not feelings; it appears that only he can know that he is angry. (Heal 2004, 228)

A striking feature of this exchange is that before the skeptic could conclude that he does not know anything about others on the basis of a particular case, he will want some indication as to why he has to take a particular ground for doubt seriously. He needs to be shown what reason he has to think, on this occasion, here and now, that he might be reading another person's expressions wrong, or that the other person might be pretending, or that it might not be angered he is feeling but rather something else. The skeptic's claim to rationality is bound up with his matching those procedures sufficiently well (Heal 2004, 228). In the end, it is the skeptic's claim that everyone turns out to be more of a stranger to him than he had thought. The mere possibility of pretence means he has no way of finding out. Cavell (1979, 451; see Heal 2004, 234) suggests that "...an initial sanity requires recognizing that I cannot live my skepticism, whereas with respect to others a final sanity requires recognizing that I can." Using Wittgensteinian thinking, the skeptic has a malady of failing to believe and to trust in others. In Thomistic thinking, the skeptic is unable to live up to his capacity as a rational being to arrive at truth with certitude.

CONDITION OF THE SKEPTIC AS SKEPTICAL

Man's condition as a rational being refers to his possession of reason, intellect, and will, to his having the capacity to think, will, and act (and to act with responsibility). It is from man's rational nature that the inclination or aptitude to arrive at truth and to know with certainty stem forth. The problem of the skeptic is he doubts that this is at all possible. I turn to Aquinas in this portion of my paper to unravel why this is so.

To understand why skeptics are skeptical requires scrutinizing the very mechanism by which cognition and judgment occur. Aquinas's generic notion of cognition (*cognitio*) covers all cognitive activities and their results, comprising both apprehension and judgment. Correct judgment for Aquinas can be attained by perfect use of reason and by way of "connaturality."⁴

Aquinas refers to cognition by connaturality as "judgment by inclination" and at other times as "affective cognition" (*cognitio affectiva*). Cognition (*cognitio*) in Aquinas is also called connatural knowledge or judgment by "connaturality."⁵ Judgment by connaturality refers to judging or knowing according to our dispositions or inclinations. For example, the person who enjoys theater as to take it up as for his career, studies theater arts, learns the mechanics of performances, drama, and stage shows, watches plays, and understands acting and production simply because he likes theater. The person who likes music strives to understand music, listens to music, plays music. Connatural knowledge (or simply cognition) has a cognitive mechanism such that "the affection becomes the condition of the object."⁶ We judge or know according to our dispositions and inclinations.

Following Aquinas (1947, I-II q. 84, A. 1), the mechanism of cognition functions in a manner that "the received is in the receiver according to the mode of the receiver" (*receptum est in recipiente per modum recipientis*).⁷ For one to have knowledge about something, likeness (*similitudo*) between the liker and the liked must be attained. Since the material object, the proper object of human cognition, cannot be received by the immaterial human intellect unless it changes its being into the immaterial intelligible species as a likeness of the object, "the received," the object of cognition, changes its manner of being for "the receiver," the human intellect. In affective cognition or cognition through connaturality, since moral or religious facts as object of cognition are immaterial, it is not the object that will change its being. Since moral facts and truths are unchangeable, to receive them, the receiver or the subject of the cognition should be the one forming a certain likeness of the object in himself to acquire a connaturality with the object. The likeness is what we call "virtue." For example, the man who wants to know the virtue of sobriety must adopt his behavior to a sober, temperate, restrained, modest lifestyle, moderate in the consumption of material goods and in the enjoyment of legitimate pleasures, consuming only what is necessary. The man who wants to possess the virtue of chastity must abstain from lustful thoughts, words, and deed; from sinful pleasures of the flesh; from concupiscence; and live purity according to his state (single, married, or celibate).

I aim to propose that what Aquinas calls a “disposition for cognition” unlocks the answer to why the skeptic is skeptical. Let me now clarify what is meant by “connaturality.” In his commentary on Aristotle’s discussion of virtue in *Nicomachean ethics*, Aquinas describes connaturality as a sort of love, found in the appetite. In the *Summa theologiae*, he suggests that connaturality (*connaturalitas*) is something interchangeable with inclination (*inclinatio*) and aptitude (*aptitudo*). He (1947, I-II, q. 23, a. 4) says:

Now, in the movements of the appetitive faculty, as it were, good has a force of attraction, while evil has a force of repulsion. In the first place, therefore, good causes, in the appetitive power, a kind of inclination, aptitude or connaturality in respect of good: and this belongs to the *passion of love*. [Emphasis mine.]⁸

He discusses how appetite is of three types: natural inclination (*inclinatio naturalis*), sensitive appetite (*appetitive sensitivus*), and intellectual appetite (*appetitus intellectivus*) or will (*voluntas*). Corresponding to these divisions of appetite, there are three kinds of love or connaturality, namely, natural love (*amor naturalis*), sensitive love (*amor sensitivus*), and intellectual love (*amor intellectivus*).

Now in each of these appetites, the principle of movement towards the end loved is called love. In the natural appetite the principle of this movement is the appetitive subject’s connaturality with the things to which it tends, and can be called natural love: thus the connaturality of a heavy body for the centre is by reason of its heaviness and can be called natural love. In like manner the coaptitude of the sensitive appetite or of the will to some good, that is to say, its complacency in good, is called sensitive love, or intellectual or rational love. (Aquinas 1947, I-II, q. 26, a. 1)

We observe that Aquinas (1947, I, q. 13, a. 1, ad 3) is using the expression “connaturality” or “connatural” (*connaturale*) for the natural inclination of the things. For example, he writes, “But in this life it is connatural for our intellect to be related to material and sensible things [as its object].”

Certainly, in his understanding of connatural knowledge, Aquinas does not imply that the modes of cognition is such that the human intellect is directed at the material and sensible for its object by natural inclination at all times. If this were so, even “the perfect use of reason,” which he contrasts with connatural knowledge would also be counted as connatural knowledge. Based on the Aquinas text just mentioned, it is not clear why “the perfect use of reason” should not involve connaturality, for using reason perfectly must be connatural to the human being as rational animal [Compare: “Yet the need of reason is from a defect in the intellect, since those things in which the intellectual power is in full vigor, have no need for reason, for they comprehend the truth by their simple insight, as do God and the angels” (Aquinas 1947, III, q. 45, a. 5)]. But looking at the text, “He who has the habit of chastity judges rightly of such matters [of chastity] by a kind of connaturality”

(Aquinas 1947, II-II, q 45, a.2), we can glean that rectitude of judgment happens in two ways: first, by perfect use of reason [reason denotes here, not the power of reason, but its good use (Aquinas 1947, III, q. 45, a. 5)]; secondly, by a kind of connaturality with the matter about which one has to judge. Thus, about matters of temperance, a man who has learnt the *science* of morals judges rightly through inquiry by *reason*, while he who has the *habit* of temperance judges rightly of such matters by a kind of *connaturality*. Accordingly, we will find that Aquinas says that the mode of cognition in question occurs “on account of a *kind* of (*quaedam*) connaturality” not merely “on account of connaturality” (Suto 2004, 61).

Moreover, when Aquinas (1947, I-II, q. 26, a. 1) wrote in *Summa theologiae* (earlier quoted), he does not call love that occurs in the sensitive and intellectual appetites connaturality but *coaptitude* (*coaptatio*) and *complacency* (*complacentia*). Additionally, in talking about love as a passion in the proper sense (like that which occurs in our sensitive appetitive powers), he says (1947, I-II, q. 27, a. 1) that “love implies a kind of connaturality or complacency of the lover for the things beloved.”

Suto’s reading of this is that complacency is a kind of connaturality or quasi-connaturality, but not connaturality in its proper sense. From a thorough survey of “connaturality” and “connatural” in the *Index Thomisticus*,¹⁰ Suto’s contention is that Aquinas uses these terms straightforwardly (that is to say, without “a kind of”) almost exclusively for the natural inclinations of things and, therefore, the natural inclination is supposed to be the proper meaning of “connaturality.” Suto goes on to explain that the connaturality in question is not an innate aptitude based upon the nature of the things (which is the proper use of the term “connaturality”) but is rather the *acquired aptitude* formed in the sensitive and intellectual appetitive powers (which is rather a derivative use of the term “connaturality”). In other words, the connaturality is not the aptitude that is based upon our “first nature,” but is based upon our “second nature.” The first nature is what we have at our birth and the second is what we develop after our birth. So far, the second nature is different from the first, but it is not indifferent to the first nature. Rather, the second nature develops upon the basis of the first. I support Suto in his contention that the development of virtues is something desired, chosen, and willed. From him, I draw out a relationship between connaturality (as coaptitude) to explain my claim for the skeptic’s disposition to doubt as something willed. In other words, the skeptic’s skepticism is an *acquired aptitude* (or attitude in Wittgensteinian language). It is an ability to dodge all possibility of arriving at certain knowledge or truth. Like a skill perfected with practice, the skeptic works at mastery in eluding all likelihood of arriving at an answer as to cease all his doubt.

Using Aquinas’s theory of judgment by connaturality, we can glean that our cognitions then depend upon our dispositions, which show that *our cognitions are strongly connected with our passions*. To attain its object, human cognition forms a certain likeness of the object. Human cognition acquires a connaturality or inclination with its object. For example, the person passionate over justice will strive to understand justice, must become just, love being just, performs actions that are consistent with the virtue of justice. In like manner, the person passionate over skepticism must become doubtful, learns to doubt and to doubt systematically. In logical fashion, one skeptical of God’s existence is skeptical because his affections

are to be doubtful of God; on a deeper level, we could infer that his affections are to be uncertain about having a transcendent being above him, about having no greater being he is subordinate to or subjects himself to. Since the skeptic's paradigm is nothing can be known with certainty, the skeptic is resolved to parry every response to his questions. In the narrowness of his disposition to open himself to answers, unfortunately, he will limit the capacity of his cognition of his knowledge. I think such a condition is deeply tragic. The skeptic seems to have condemned himself to a condition of ignorance. He doubts there are solutions to problems. He refuses to conduct his own investigation because he is doubtful, to start with, that he will find any satisfactory counterarguments to his own arguments. In other words, he prefers to remain in his lack of knowledge. By way of analogy, we can assume that for the religious skeptic, he does not know and he had not wanted to know if a God indeed exists. It is a deficient state in the sense that one never makes progress in his knowledge. He is confined to his doubt and is unable to resolve uncertainty (which in Wittgensteinian language is an illness). Because the opposite is certainly true, following Aquinas's logic, then if a person were passionately in love with truth, that person will want to know truth, acquire the answers to his questions, pursue definitive, absolute answers to those questions if only to arrive at truth, and will want to conform his/her life to truth. Since knowledge and belief influence action, the truth-lover strives to live up to the truth. The lover of virtue will ask what virtue is, understand virtue, learn virtue, and practice virtue.

Following this thinking, the skeptic, being a lover of doubt, learns the process of methodical doubting, doubts that anything (epistemic knowledge, facts, truth, God's existence) can be known at all. Applying our earlier reasoning, we conjecture that the skeptic's thinking is bound to affect his behavior, which would be a kind of acting without sureness. Applied to moral behavior, the moral skeptic would logically be uncertain as to moral right and wrong. Following Suto's reading of Aquinas's theory of connaturality, we can argue that the moral skeptic is disposed not to know what is morally certain. The religious skeptic, in like manner, is resolved to leave God's existence to uncertainty, a matter to be subjected to suspicion and perhaps disbelief. Such is his passion: to deploy the possibility of the competence of *all* evidence—empirical, behavioral, philosophical, or religious.

WITTGENSTEIN'S RESPONSE TO SKEPTICISM

Having explained the condition of the skeptic, I now turn to the certainty that Wittgenstein is interested to resolve the problem of the skeptic. Certainty, in Wittgensteinian thinking, is one based on attitude or a settled mode of behavior, a fixed way of thinking. It is our human form of life that settles this mode. We are born with intrinsic dispositions; for instance, the attitude of one who has a soul. We behave as though others have a mind. We communicate with them and we know we would be understood if we spoke the same language. We were born with dispositions like this. In the same regard, we were born with the capacity to discern truth from falsehood. It is a built-in faculty or competence of our human nature. The issue raised by the skeptic, however, is not whether we can avoid using the words "true" or "false." The true skeptic denies "that there are any such truths, not merely that

we can avoid using the usual labels" (M. Moore 2002, 4). In *Philosophical investigations*, Wittgenstein (1947, § 241) writes, "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?—It is what humans say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life." Stanley Cavell (1979, 115; see Proessel 2005, 332) suggests that the fact we agree *in* a form of life is meant to highlight that we are "mutually attuned" in our judgments, definitions and natural reactions. If we are not attuned, it only shows that we are off the track of the normal mode of behavior, that we have strayed from the generally accepted course of conduct. Wittgenstein (1947, §185) cites the case of the pupil who interprets the rule, "add 2," by counting in fours after 1000. According to Wittgenstein, the pupil does not pose a skeptical threat to which we must respond. On the contrary, this pupil's behavior gives us grounds to say his way of reacting to the rule is abnormal. The fact that his reactions are out of agreement with our practices and judgments tell us so. Without an agreement in judgments (Wittgenstein 1947, §242) there would not be a rule. And that is just the point: normality (and thus logic) is not fixed by means of algorithms or rules; rather, it involves our being mutually attuned in our ways of acting and judging (Proessel 2005, 332). Not to adapt to the customary ways of acting would be to detach oneself from established human conventions. In society, people live with an awareness of a mode of life that they have to accommodate themselves to. Not to do so would be to cut oneself off from society.

In *On certainty*, one of the things Wittgenstein stresses is that the background of understanding is a background of considerable trust. "The child," he (1969-75, 160) writes, "learns by believing the adult. Doubt comes *after* belief."

For example: I am told . . . that someone climbed this mountain many years ago. Do I always enquire into the reliability of the teller of the story, and whether the mountain did exist many years ago? A child learns there are reliable and unreliable informants much later than it learns facts which are told it. It doesn't learn *at all* that the mountain has existed for a long time: that is, the question concerning whether it is so doesn't arise at all. It swallows this consequence down, so to speak, together with *what* it learns. (Wittgenstein 1969-75, 143)

Proessel comments that not only does the child not doubt the reliability of the teller of a story, but also in hearing a story about a mountain, a child does not question whether that mountain has existed for a long time. That mountains are very old remains *unquestioned*; this fact the child "swallows down" as a consequence of learning other facts about the mountain. As Wittgenstein (1969-75, 476) says:

Children do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc., etc.—they learn to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc., etc. Later, questions about the existence of things do of course arise. 'Is there such a thing as a unicorn?' and so on. But such a question is possible only because as a rule no corresponding question presents itself.

We understand this to mean that children are not taught to learn to believe by “learning rules,” nor do they *singly* learn what to believe. The child, rather, learns to believe a “host of things” and is “taught judgments and their connection with other judgments. A totality of judgments is made possible” (Wittgenstein 1969-75, 140). In other words, children are taught to judge by being introduced into grammatical practices or a world-picture. The process is not much different for adults. “Those beliefs that stand fast are not something we later in life consider giving a justification or calling into question, unless of course there is some reason for so doing,” comments Proessel (2005, 334). Indeed, even in our efforts to justify our beliefs, we can only go so far in our efforts at rationalization. As earlier discussed in the section *On the importance of certainty*, much of what we believe as adults has been based on trust and are simply unquestioned. To quote Wittgenstein (1969-75, 150, 600):

How does someone judge which is his right and which is his left hand? How do I know that my judgment will agree with someone else’s? How do I know that this colour is blue? If I don’t trust myself here, why should I trust anyone else’s judgment? Is there a why? Must I not somewhere begin to trust? That is to say: somewhere I must begin with non-doubting; and that is not, so to speak, hasty but excusable: it is part of judging.

What kind of grounds have I for trusting text-books of physics? I have no grounds for not trusting them. And I trust them. I know how such books are produced—or rather, I believe I know. I have some evidence, but it does not go very far and is of a very scattered kind. I have heard, seen and read various things.

Humans agree in the language they use about what is true and what is false. Our attitudes are instinctive. Our relation to a practice, world-picture or system of beliefs is not epistemological. “I did not,” Wittgenstein (1969-75, 94) writes, “get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false.”

Following Wittgenstein, we can point to the skeptic as one falling into deviant talk. There are things in this world, considering our sociological form of life, that are given. Yet he questions why the picture is such and such as to lay doubts on personal identity, on whether other persons have a mind of their own, on whether animals talk. Unhinging himself on the given world-picture, the skeptic can be alienating and isolating himself from the rest of the world. The skeptic thus has gotten stuck in some kind of a “muddle,” unable to pull himself out. Andrea Kern (2002, 200) resonates this with the comment:

...with Wittgenstein originates the idea that philosophical problems are a sort of ‘muddle’ that we fall into when we reflect upon ourselves in certain ways. In the course of such a reflection we, for example, make the ostensible discovery that it is impossible in principle for us to have knowledge of the external world or of the inner states of other subjects.

Our mistake here, according to Wittgenstein, is not that we have come upon a false theory of the subject matter of our enquiry. Rather, we are caught in a confusion which springs from the form of our reflection whose character is not transparent to us. Wittgenstein therefore responds to the problems raised by scepticism not with a philosophical theory which would solve these problems. He rather offers a 'therapy' which is meant to free us from being exercised by them.

This philosophical therapy, which is not a theory, has two conceptions. First, a philosophical therapy seeks to *dissolve* skepticism: it attempts to show that the skeptic's doubt is intelligible only in the light of philosophical preconceptions which are by no means unavoidable. In challenging these preconceptions, it recommends to the skeptic a point of view from which her doubt no longer makes sense (Kern 2004, 200-201).¹¹ What is the point, we might ask, in doubting one's identity? Or that the earth is round? Or that one has a soul?

Second, a philosophical therapy performs an operation that is properly *paradoxical*: it seeks to overcome doubt, not by dissolving, but by affirming it. However, as it affirms the skeptic's doubt, it reinterprets its meaning. Its goal, then, is not to show the skeptic that her doubt is meaningless, but that it has a meaning *different* from the one she herself ascribes to it. The skeptic's doubt contains an incontestable truth, one the skeptic herself, however, cannot comprehend (Kern 2004, 201).

PERILS OF SKEPTICISM

The kind of doubting skepticism espouses has destructive effects. It undermines trust, the very moral fabric of society. Aquinas (1947, II-II, 109, 3 *ad* 1) says, "Men could not live with one another if there were not mutual confidence that they were being true to one another." What use would it be being truthful to the skeptic when all he has is persistent unbelief? People around the skeptic may strive giving him knowledge and truth in all sincerity, to the best of their abilities, living up to Aquinas's (1947, II-II 109, 3 *corp. art.* 264) dictum "as a matter of honor, one man owes it to another to manifest the truth," but only to be disregarded by the skeptic. Such an attitude would only weaken friendships, make interpersonal relations shaky, as there would be no assurance of acceptance of your declarations on the skeptic's side. Much as friends would like to share creeds, thoughts, convictions, ideologies, treasured doctrines of faith, perhaps, backed up by study, validated through research, and grounded on substantive proofs, the skeptic's mind is shut to this. In no way then can personal relations flourish to the level of mutual trust with the skeptic.

Doubting further involves extensive abating of investigative procedures and norms of assessment. Withholding confidence in any authority would weaken a whole genre of evidence and thereby disable all empirical enquiry: of the past, the future, the external world, and the mental states of others. It means doubting the weight of a body of evidence which is normally taken overwhelmingly to support them, and therefore being forced to doubt the relevance of that evidence expressed in propositions such that, as Wittgenstein (1969-75, 203) puts it, "everything speaks for them and nothing against them."

By doubting reality itself, a skeptical state gives no anchor to reality. It asks what ties our belief-forming mechanisms to the way things really are? The skeptic has questions and, for him, we have no definite answers. His skeptical inquiry is the kind that leads to a constant state of doubt. How do we know all that we think we know, or even any of it? How can we be rational in believing anything? Should we suspend belief about everything, or at least nearly everything? Believing that his words have a certain meaning rather than others, the skeptic formulates his questions and challenges so that we are unable to arrive at any definitive answer. A skeptical state then makes for a pervasive condition of loss and instability. Whatever we say for the skeptic is either subject to suspicion or a matter of incredulity. For him, there is no room for belief.

As discussed earlier, belief is inevitable in human life. And it is rational. It is the characteristic of human beings to live and interact with others. This is the human condition. To start with, human beings do not come about into the world alone. They are conceived within another human being, born in principle, into a family, and grow in a family, and eventually enter society, to be surrounded by even more persons. They acquire and learn a language within the community they are brought up almost instinctively, communicate and use that language to express themselves without having to be taught rules of communication. In the same way, they acquire a cultural formation and a range of truths in which they believe oftentimes almost unconsciously. It belongs to their form of life, to their human status for this to be so. Yet growth, personal development, and exposure to the world can lead to these same truths being subjected to doubt and assessed critically in a process of inquiry. Some of these truths may be given up, later reclaimed through further reasoning, and from insight gained through experience. As experience shows us, there are in life truths that human beings simply believe. We have tacit presuppositions that we do not subject to doubt, like the certainty of our existence. To doubt this is a contradiction. We are personally unable to examine the daily news reports that come in or information about scientific discoveries, and yet we accept them as generally true. This only says that the human being who goes about looking for knowledge and truth on a day-to-day basis really also subsists by belief.

In doubting, the skeptic is setting himself against any overwhelming body of evidence, since for him, no one has any evidence for any belief whatsoever, for it is a peculiarity of the skeptical situation that there is no *supportive* evidence at all. As the skeptical argument shows, if confidence in a belief were once suspended, no evidence could make it rational to even reinstate those beliefs again. Moreover, skepticism in relationships fosters experiencing others as strangers to us or ourselves as strangers to them. This breeds isolation—particularly where it is in the service of my sense of *unknownness*, where I come to doubt that I can ever be known—are pervasive. To live our skepticism is to read our ignorance of others, to impose our failures of intimacy and understanding, and to slip the world out of our hands (Heal 2004, 235).

The central thrust of the skeptical argument of whatever stripe is precisely that what we could count as the acquisition of knowledge, or justification of it, rests on groundless presuppositions (Wright 2004, 40-42).

CONCLUSION

The virtue of trust is an essential element in life, and especially in interpersonal relations. It involves more than just the capacity to know. Our relations to persons in general rest in our capacity to acknowledge them as persons (Cavel 1976, 304) and in what Wittgenstein (1953, §178) invites us to call an "attitude towards a soul." To acknowledge another person is to express recognition of identification with, and an offer of attention or response to him or her (Heal 2004, 231). It entails the exercise of a profound capacity to surrender oneself in an intimate and enduring manner to the person I have belief in. How do I know my father is my father? I could doubt the records: my birth certificate, my parent's marriage records. I could ask him for proofs and logical arguments to attest to his fatherhood. But I do not. I simply take my father's word that he is my father. I do not even look for evidence.

Cavell suggests that the skeptic's doubt rests on demythologizing our position in relation to others (McManus 2004, 15). For Minar (see Cavell 1979, 235), other-minds skepticism reflects the fact that "each moment with others contains the prospect of both doubt *and* (if I let myself be open to the other, and the other to me) its overcoming." He adds that crucial to this pervasive possibility is our willingness to be open to others, to know and to be known by others. Minar also views the doubts of the eternal-world skeptic as words drained of the meaning they superficially appear to possess. McGinn (2004, 251) comments that the skeptic's doubt, whether intellectual or theoretical, lacks connections, "practical, emotional, and conceptual," that are characteristic of the mistrustful, hesitant, circumspect modes of involvement with others that constitute our ordinary doubts. As such, she says, the meaning of the skeptic's "doubt" is unclear, at best representing a wholly distinct form (or concept) of doubt.

When it comes to interpersonal relationships, we note that the truth we seek is not empirical, not even philosophical. Belief, in this sense, which requires a dynamic self-giving and submission, is stronger than evidence. It trusts in the truth of the person before me, which presupposes faith, confidence, and even reliance on the other person. And it is in this trust that one puts his certainty and security. Religious belief, for that matter, requires acknowledging God as a person with whom one could enter into a relationship.¹² In simply entrusting myself to the truth of what another declares to me, I give myself in an act of self-surrender. This is why "knowledge through belief, grounded as it is on trust between persons, is linked to truth: in the act of believing, men and women entrust themselves to the truth which the others declare to them" (John Paul II 1998, 32).

Through the inherent capacities of thought, man is able to recognize truth when others profess it to him. So vital and necessary is this capacity of reason, otherwise, we would go through life unable to detect truth from falsehood. But it is also the nature of reason to seek the true good and a search can achieve its end only in reaching the absolute. Such a search can be attained by reason but also by a "*trusting acquiescence* to other persons who can guarantee the authenticity and certainty of the truth itself" (John Paul II 1998, 33). What the skeptic needs is to cultivate the capacity to entrust himself and his life to other persons. While there can be barriers among some people, which are not of our own making, these barriers are not indestructible

or impenetrable. In fact, the other person can always be regarded as an “other,” capable of erecting new walls or tearing them down in unanticipated ways. Letting the other be the other requires both a capacity for resolute attentiveness to his or her particularity and willingness for the other to reveal him or herself (Heal 2004, 236). The decision to do so would help eliminate *suspicion and doubt* in relationships. But trusting requires a readiness to depend on others and to give up self-sufficiency. It is a condition of self-giving, of faith, and confidence in other persons, in the veracity of their claims, and in their capacity to lead us to knowledge and truth.

NOTES

1. Our human form of life establishes certain biological and sociological functions like the use of language. “It is said that animals do not talk because they lack the mental capacity. And this means: ‘they do not think, and that is why they do not talk.’ But—they simply do not talk. Or put it better: they do not use language...” (Wittgenstein 1953, §25). That animals do not talk simply belongs to their form of life. In contrast, because it pertains to his form of life, man thinks, talks, and uses language. He plays the language game. “Here the term ‘language-game’ is meant to bring into prominence the fact that speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life” (Wittgenstein 1953, §23).

2. In a lecture, George E. Moore (1959, 145-46; see Proessel 2005, 324) remarks, “I can prove now, for instance, that two human hands exist. How? By holding up my two hands, and saying, as I make a certain gesture with my right hand, “Here is one hand,” and adding, as I make a certain gesture with the left, “and here is another.” And if, by doing this, I have proved ipso facto the existence of external things you will see that I can also do it now in numbers of other ways: there is no need to multiply examples.”

3. The question of whether persons have other minds revolves around John Stuart Mills’s classic formulation, “because my body and outward behavior are observably similar to the bodies and behavior of others, I am justified by analogy in believing that others have feelings like my own and are not simply automatons” (“Problem of other minds,” 2009).

4. The term “connaturality” appears in Aquinas’s *Commentary on the Nichomachean ethics* (1964, II L. V:C 293) and in the *Summa theologiae*.

5. Precisely, because man distinguishes himself from animals not only by that which is essentially reasonable, but also by that which participates in rationality, since the passions in man are open to reason as they are capable of being influenced by reason [which is not the case with animals]. Thus we can rightly say that human passions participate in rationality. I will show in my later discussion how the skeptic’s passions are ordered towards doubting by his very reasoning and willing it.

6. “...*affectus transit in conditionem objecti*.” Suto (2004, 61) writes that most of the commentators of connatural knowledge have introduced this statement in their interpretations.

7. “...the intellect, according to its own mode, receives under conditions of immateriality and immobility, the species of material and mobile bodies: for the received is in the receiver according to the mode of the receiver. We must conclude,

therefore, that through the intellect the soul knows bodies by a knowledge which is immaterial, universal, and necessary." (Aquinas 1947, I-II q. 84, A. 1)

8. A more in-depth and lengthier discussion of the concept passion in Aquinas is intended for another paper. Given limitations of time, a detailed analysis of Thomistic passion could not be accommodated in this initial study.

9. Compare: "Now, this is the measure proper for man: for the perfection of their operations there must be present in them, above their natural potencies, certain perfections and habits whereby they may operate well and do the good, connaturally, easily and enjoyably, as it were." "*Est autem hic modus proprius hominum, quod ad perfectionem suarum operationum quasdam perfectiones et habitus, quibus quasi connaturaliter et faciliter et delectabiliter bonum et bene operentur.*" The Latin text is quoted from "*Liber de Veritate Catholicae Fidei contra errores Infidelium seu*" (Aquinas 1961, Bk. 3, chap. 150, n. 3231).

10. The origin of the concept, not the expression itself, is found in Aristotle's distinction between "disposition" (*diathesis*) and "habit" (*hexis*) in the *Nicomachean ethics*. The expression "second nature" (*natura secunda*) is found in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* (for example, I-II, q. 82, a. 1). In more than one place (for example, in I-II, q. 72, a. 2, ad 1; I-II, q. 58, a. 1, obj. 3), Aquinas introduces Cicero as using the expression "second nature": "Cicero says that virtue is a habit in accord with reason, like a second nature." The Marietti edition of *Summa theologiae* gives its reference to Cicero's *De inventione* (1961, 2, 53), but the expression "second nature" itself is not found in the designated text.

11. Kern draws the idea from John McDowell, Cora Diamond, Marie McGinn, and Stanley Cavell who distinguish the two conceptions of philosophical therapy in Wittgensteinian therapy of skepticism.

12. Religious skepticism is a complex problem that can be explored by itself in an entire research paper on the topic alone. I simply intend to spark off an initial discussion here from which a longer discussion could ensue.

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NONCONCEPTUALISM AND THE COGNITIVE PROCESS OF PERCEPTION

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Gareth Evans was first to express the idea that our perceptual experience is more detailed than what our concepts possess and this brings in the idea of nonconceptualism. The nonconceptualist claims that creatures without conceptual ability can be in a content-bearing state (nonconceptual state) since they do not possess concept, memory or linguistic ability. Concepts are the constituents of those intentional contents that are the complete truth-evaluable contents of judgment and belief. This paper examines the possibility of nonconceptual content in human perception and considers the complementarism of conceptualism and nonconceptualism as a more viable basis for explaining human perception. This synthesis, the paper suggests, overcomes the epistemological deficiencies inherent in any unilateral approach to understanding the nature, character, and process of cognition thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the human cognitive process.

INTRODUCTION

The idea that our perceptual experience is more detailed than what concepts we possess brings in the idea of nonconceptualism in perception. Gareth Evans (1982) was the first to make this point in *The varieties of reference*. Christopher Peacocke's famous Autonomy Thesis, otherwise known as the Autonomy Principle, further buttresses Evans's argument. It states that it is possible for a creature to be in perceptual states with nonconceptual content even though that creature possesses no conceptual ability at all. The idea of nonconceptual content of perceptual experience had since then been generating serious polemics among philosophers of perception. The nonconceptualist argues that creatures without conceptual ability can be in a content-bearing state (nonconceptual state) since they do not possess concept, memory, or linguistic ability. Concepts are considered the constituents of intentional contents that are the complete truth-evaluable contents of judgment and belief. We intend to examine the possibility of nonconceptual content in human perception and considers the complementarism of conceptualism and nonconceptualism as a more viable basis for explaining human perception. This

synthesis, we believe, shall overcome the epistemological deficiencies inherent in any unilateral approach to understanding the nature, character, and process of cognition thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the human cognitive process.

CONCEPTUALISM AND PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE

The conceptualist conceives conceptual content as that which can be ascribed to judgment and belief which conforms to Frege's criterion of identity for *sense* and *reference*. Concepts are understood in this sense as constituents of intentional contents that are or can be the complete truth-evaluable components of judgment and belief. The conceptualist holds that any experience which cannot explain its close connection with belief should be rejected and that since all representational contents of experience are describable, then they are structurally conceptual. Hence, there is nothing like nonconceptual content because even though the phenomenon for whose description has been taking place still invokes concepts of some perceptual-demonstrative or what is recognitional in perception. If the least of human experience is describable as "that shade," the conceptualist claims, is it enough to satisfy the need for conceptualization and cognition? But, is this description enough for a knowledge claim?

John McDowell (1994) with his famous book, *Mind and world*, proves to be most provocative advocate of conceptualism. He conceives of perceptual experience as a strict conceptual achievement. He argues that any experience that cannot be subsumed under concepts, whether as belief or judgment, is not genuine and cannot be relevant to perception. To him, all forms of experiences are intentionally driven and belief-directed. For this reason, he cannot imagine any experience devoid of concept or belief. In this sense, he agrees with John Kekes (1977, 89) that "all perception is theory bound." McDowell (1994, 44) claims that "nothing can simply be a reason for a belief except another... belief" and that "only belief bequeaths belief." If this holds, then how does belief get started?

McDowell endorses the fundamental rationalists' insight which suggests that to be aware of something—in the sense that such awareness can serve as evidence for beliefs amounting to knowledge—is to bring it under a concept. This has also been the argument for Hamlyn (1994, 142) in "Perception, sensation and non-conceptual content." Since the process of judgment does not introduce a new kind of content while perceiving, McDowell (1994, 63) argues for nonconceptuality. He says that only experience endorses conceptual content or parts of it and that only upon it that experiences are grounded. But we know that experience is more fine-grained than the concepts, beliefs, and judgments we have. How then can concepts be spontaneously derived from experience? It is not at all times that our experiences are *fully* endorsed by our beliefs and judgments.

A careful reading of McDowell reveals that he sometimes conflates conceptuality with nonconceptuality. At times he gives the impression that the content of perceptual experience is totally conceptually structured and, at another time, he gives the impression that it is partly nonconceptual and as such not relevant to perception. He (see Wright 2003) admits that there are two kinds of beliefs acquired

non-inferentially: one is the reliable disposition to respond differently to stimuli or report elements of the causal chain which culminates in the report; and the other is by mere non-inferential observation. In genuine perception, he argues that belief is the result of endorsing the content of a perceptual experience but in mere observation, belief is acquired blindly. He claims that under a correct circumstance, the perceiver spontaneously finds himself in a belief situation—a formation of fact not immediately visible but generally perceptible. Although these beliefs are non-inferentially elicited from the believer by environmental stimuli, the warrant for those beliefs is in an important sense inferential. The believer's justification for beliefs of this sort depends on drawing conclusions from an antecedent claim of reliability.

Sometimes, a reporter suspects his reliability under certain conditions of observation and reports his disposition of something being *x* while withholding his endorsement of that claim, by saying only that it looks or appears *x*. McDowell reacts to this by making a distinction between the report of appearance and the actual report of perceptual experience. He holds that the capacity to have perceptual experience is different from and more fundamental than the capacity to make non-inferential observation. He claims that unless we could have perceptual experience, we could not make any observation. Even at this, we can still argue that not all observations of state of affairs involve perceptual experience of those states of affairs. The capacity to become non-inferentially informed about the world by learning blindly to respond differentially to it depends upon a more basic capacity for states of affairs to become immediately apparent in perception. But, is it not important for McDowell to explain what a notion of conceptually structured observation is like? He argues that without the notion of a conceptually articulated perceptual experience which distinguishes genuine perception from a mere responsively acquired non-inferential belief, we cannot understand the empirical content of our claim.

McDowell does not construe perceptual experience as something involving the sort of endorsement characteristic of judging or believing but of content that is *judgeable* and *believable* itself. So, when a perceiver advances from perceptual experience to judgment or belief, the experience only serves in the capacity of justifying the resulting commitment, no more no less. This signifies McDowell's endorsement of the Fregean approach, which construes facts as true thought: "thoughts" not in the psychological sense of thinking, but in the semantic sense of the contents that are thought or that which is thinkable. This argument seems to rule out the possibility of perceptual mistakes. But, we know that we sometimes cannot tell the difference between the cases in which we are having a perceptual experience whose content matches with reality and that which does not.

Traditionally, this argument has been criticized by the famous "Argument from Illusion" where the perceiver has the same perceptual content for both the veridical and the nonveridical cases in perception. McDowell's objection to making the distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual contents is not epistemological but rather semantic. His doctrine of semantic empiricism only shows that if we can make it a feature of our thought and talk intelligible for perceptual experience, then we can make it intelligible for any claim or belief. For him, the only thing a veridical perceptual experience and a corresponding hallucination have in common is that their subject cannot tell them apart but there is no need separating them.

McDowell says perceptual experience is “immediate” in the same sense that conceptual abilities are, so he sees no reason for making any distinction between them. He claims that concepts are spontaneously derived in perception and that the conceptual content for making judgment by inference is the same as the perceptual content of the experience. He argues that the only visible difference lies in the wrong application of concepts when we express them in language. But we also know that the ways in which concepts are acquired in perception are gradual and they sometimes fall short of our judgment and belief. There are occasions when we lack the confidence to endorse knowledge about our experience as it is presented to us.

McDowell claims that to be aware of something is just to apply concepts to it, which means to make a judgment or undertake a doxastic commitment regarding it. Awareness deserves to be called “immediate” just in case it is not the product of a process of inference. Therefore, beliefs acquired non-inferentially, especially through the exercise of reliable dispositions to respond differently to stimuli of a certain sort, is yet conceptual even though it embodies immediate awareness of the items reported. It is only in the sense of an “immediate awareness,” he contends, that we can understand the knowledge of the perceptual experience around us.

A reliable non-inferential response to events does not necessarily mean that one has concepts of such events. Observational/non-inferential knowledge should be distinguished from cases of genuine perceptual knowledge. What McDowell often refers to as knowledge derived from perception can be classified under observational knowledge. But, there are occasions when we see colours or shapes of which we have perceptual experience corresponding to the judgment from which we can go on to make or form beliefs without having genuine knowledge about. We sometimes respond blindly and still trust such blind responses only to discover later our mistake.

Bill Brewer (1994, 62), also a conceptualist, claims that “perceptual experiences justify beliefs” and as such “sense experiential states provide reasons for empirical beliefs.” He conceives perceptual experience as that with rational relations to judgment and beliefs to the extent that its spontaneity is already implied in its reception. This argument only applies if we understand experience as conceptually structured in the sense McDowell (1994, 62) conceives it. W. F. Sellars (1963) also conceives concepts as the sole responsibility of the correct use of words. For her, having concept involves mastering the use of words. Therefore, if a word is properly used, it is believed that one has the concept. So, for Sellars, no one can understand the concept “red” unless he knows what it is for things to look “red” and make appropriate use of the word.

NONCONCEPTUALISM AND PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE

The nonconceptualist holds that it is possible to have a nonconceptual content in perception and that such content is representationally significant, that is, meaningful in the “semantic” sense of describing or referring to states-of-affairs, properties, or individuals of some sort. In a more precise sense, nonconceptualism claims that there are cognitive capacities which are not determined (or at least not

fully determined) by conceptual capacities and that the cognitive capacities which outstrip conceptual capacities can be possessed by rational and nonrational animals alike, whether human or nonhuman. Cognitive content in the perceptual sense is mental-representational content, whether object-directed (intentionality) or self-directed (reflexivity). And for every type of cognitive content there is a corresponding cognitive capacity by means of which a creature generates, possesses, and deploys that content. Nonconceptualists claim that one can have an experience with representational content *R* without possessing any of the concepts which figure in a proper description of *R* or that an experiencing subject need not possess any of the concepts which perception theorists would describe as a correct condition of experience (see Wright 2003, 2). Some of the perception theorists who have recently adopted this notion include Fred Dretske (1995), Gareth Evans (1982), Christopher Peacocke (1991), and Michael Tyre (1995).

There are two varieties of nonconceptual positions: those who claim that the representational content of experience can be entirely nonconceptual, a position held by Evans (1982), and those who hold that the representational content of experience can both have conceptual and nonconceptual properties, a position held by Peacocke (1992). Another possible position is also open to those who claim that not only can experience have a nonconceptual content, but that there is also the possibility of a non-conceptual nonrepresentational content of experience (Peacocke will still fall within this group).

The general argument of the nonconceptualist is that it is possible for a thinker to represent his experience of the world nonconceptually. Evans was the pioneering philosopher in this direction. He argues that perceptual experience can have a nonconceptual content as its constituent. In establishing this, he makes a distinction between informational state and judgment. An "informational state" is a mental state devoid of concepts and is belief-independent. From this distinction, experience can be separated from judgment and belief. He (1982,122) states:

When a person receives something, he receives (or, better, gathers) information about the world. . . People are, in short and among other things, gatherers, transmitters and storers of information. These platitudes locate perception, communication, and memory in a system (informational system), which constitutes the substratum of our lives.

He argues that our contact with the external world only provides us with information conglomerating into concepts, communication, memory, and perception. He develops the idea that the information yielded by our perceptual systems (including somatic proprioception) is nonconceptual. This nonconceptual information, he argues, is initially unconscious but becomes conscious when it serves as input to a thinking, concept-applying, and reasoning system.

Even though Evans is not too clear on whether perceptual states with nonconceptual content occur at the personal or subpersonal level, he maintained that the subject's conceptual abilities are brought to bear on them before concepts are formed. Today, it seems Evan's conception of nonconceptual content is antithetical to what recent philosophers of perception take it to mean. Most

contemporary discussions of nonconceptual content are at the personal level despite the fact that Evans (1982, 124) discusses it most at the unconscious/subpersonal level. However, what is of importance to philosophers of perception today is the fact that the world could be represented in such a way that it could be independent of the thinker's conceptual capacities.

Dretske (1969, 29)), like Evans, argues that the nonconceptual cognitive capacities are "subrational" or "nonrational" capacities necessary for cognition but not sufficient for our rational cognitive capacities. In other words, nonconceptual content does not exclude rationality; on the contrary, nonconceptual cognition and its content constitute the protorationality of all minded human or nonhuman animals. This contradicts the conceptualist position which holds that nonconceptual content neither exists nor is representationally significant. Not all cognitive capacities are fully determined by conceptual capacities in perception and none of the cognitive capacities of rational human animals can also be possessed by nonrational animals, whether human or nonhuman. So, the position of the conceptualist cannot hold.

The idea of nonconceptuality in perception became more substantive when the perception theorist, Tim Crane (1988, 142-47), discovers an unusual experience in the waterfall illusion. In this illusion, the after-image of the waterfall produces a contradictory appearance of something moving and yet remaining still. If the content of perceptual experience represents the true characterization of what is seen, then it cannot be contradictory. For if it is contradictory, it means that our experience is independent of the concept we form about it. For example, we know that something cannot be *F* and not-*F* at the same time or something cannot be both red and green. The discovery of the waterfall illusion raises suspicion as to whether what is experienced is limited to what concepts we possess or not.

Adopting the Priority Principle which states that "only language users can possess concepts," Bermudez argues that nonlinguistic thoughts can only be thoughts with nonconceptual content. Therefore, the experience of the world of human infants and animals can only be nonconceptual because they are not language users; they lack the necessary conceptual capacities to describe their experiences. He (1998, 61) defines nonconceptual content as "one that can be ascribed to a thinker without that thinker having to possess concepts required specifying that content." Experiences are better described by the constituent of their content; therefore, perceptual content without concepts should be described nonconceptual. Holding this view, it will mean that Kant's "intuition without concept," which he claims is blind will also be nonconceptual.

Bermudez argues that no creature, apart from those who have mastered the semantics of the first-person pronoun, can possess the capacity to think thoughts with first-person contents, which is characteristic of self-consciousness. By this, concepts are strictly tied to self-consciousness and linguistic abilities. Then, how do we describe the experience of animals and human infants who are not self-conscious of their experiences? The Autonomy Principle states that "it is possible for a creature to be in a state with non-conceptual content even though that creature possesses no concept at all" (see Bermudez 1994, 429). This puts us in the dilemma of either denying that infants have the sorts of representational states that explain many surprisingly complex kinds of behaviours they are demonstrably capable of

or ascribing to them mastery of concepts they could not possibly demonstrate. If we have to escape this dilemma, says Bermudez (1998, 132), and

do justice to both the differences and similarities between infant and adult cognition, then we will have to recognize the existence of states that represent the world in a way that is independent of concept mastery and, more so, that can be ascribed to creatures who possess no concept whatsoever.

Although Bermudez is careful in distinguishing constitutive from developmental issues, he clearly thinks that there is a connection between the two. He takes facts about cognitive development concerning the precursors of full-fledged self-consciousness to be strong evidence, not just for ontogenetic but for constitutive claims. In other words, he believes that conceptualization and cognition are achieved through developmental stages from infancy to adulthood. He (1998, 112) states that

plausible developmental progression from the cognitive skills and abilities that normal human infants have available to them at birth are via the relevant forms of non-conceptual self-consciousness which later graduates into linguistic mastery of the first-person pronoun.

With regard to the developmental stages in humans, Bermudez argues that nonconceptual self-consciousness begins at infancy with somatic proprioception and matures when the child begins to pick up some self-specifying information in extroceptive perception. So, a relatively impoverished conception of the environment may affect the visual perception and somatic proprioception of the child. It is on this background that Bermudez (1998, 164) claims that "the building-blocks for the bootstrapping process that will eventually result in the mastery of the first-person concept and the capacity for full-fledged self-consciousness is well richer than the conceptions of the environment."

Somatic proprioception provides information about the state of the body at a particular location relative to the other parts of the body. Importantly, these are pieces of "self-specifying information." Bermudez (1998, 43 and 273) maintains that somatic proprioception provides information on the perceiver's movements indicating that "the self has a place in the content of visual experience." Self-specifying information is also provided in how a perceiver views objects in relation to their own action and the sense of touch "because it is simultaneously proprioception and extroception which provides an interface between the self and the non-self."

Bermudez (1998, 43) traces the route of nonconceptuality to the state of infancy in humans. At this stage, experience is nonconceptual to an infant child. But, as the child grows, relates, and becomes aware of the environment, he gathers and acquires concepts gradually. He states that concepts acquisition "involves taking a particular route through the environment in such a way that one's perception of the world is informed by an awareness that one is taking such a route."

In view of this, Bermudez postulates the "Thought Language Principle" which comprises two parts, the "Conceptual Requirement Principle" and the "Priority

Principle.” The Conceptual Requirement Principle reveals that the range of contents that one may attribute to a creature is determined by the concepts the creature possesses, while the Priority Principle holds that conceptual abilities are constitutively linked with linguistic abilities in such a way that conceptual abilities cannot be possessed by nonlinguistic creatures.

Bermudez later rejects the Conceptual Requirement Principle in favour of the Priority Principle on the ground that the latter allows for a clear distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual modes of content-bearing representation more than the former. This is evident in the consideration of the connection between language and concepts which gives us a clear criterion for identifying the presence of conceptual representation. To suppose that linguistic abilities are necessary for conceptual abilities is to deny that even the most advanced apes do not possess concepts but experiment has shown that apes and chimpanzees do at least recognize their kinds even though they lack necessary sophistication of conceptual capacity like humans. In truth, not every concept can the mastery of language sufficiently describe, especially at every instance of human development; it will depend on the conceptual development of the perceiver’s mind. If such is the case, then it will be wrong to assume “sensing that *p*” as meaning the same thing as “thinking that *p*.” There is a gulf of difference between “feeling/sensing an object” and “thinking about it.”

ON MCDOWELL’S CONCEPTUALISM AGAIN

Having examined the arguments of both the conceptualist and nonconceptualist, it becomes clear that consenting to the possibility of demonstrative concept does not hinder the possibility of nonconceptual content in perception. The two positions are not as divergent as they seem to be, their differences are not of kind and not of degree. Their differences can then be reduced to that of semantics. If only we can resolve the semantic ambiguities in their arguments, the problem dissolves.

The major area of disparity between the conceptualist and nonconceptualist is in the denial of the nonconceptual content of perceptual experience. The nonconceptualist contends that in spite of our conceptual capacity and its gradual development, we are still left with a whole realm of nonconceptuality which deserves theoretical recognition. The nonconceptualist, however, merely accepts the implication of such a theoretical recognition, but denies nonconceptuality as significant or relevant to the cognitive process because of its limited function.

The tone of the debate is actually antagonistic but not beyond reconciliation. How then do we begin to sketch a strategy for the reconciliation? The first point in any such move, given the contour of the debate, would seem require the conceptualist to prove an apparent counter-intuitive point—that humans spontaneously develop concepts out of their perceptual experience rather than progressively achieving such a cognitive stage. The nonconceptualist does not deny the necessity of conceptualization but insists that such conceptual content must be derived from a nonconceptual repertoire of experience prior to language, beliefs, judgments, and concepts.

Since McDowell (see Brandom 2000), the leading contemporary conceptualist, has admitted that there are some perceptual experiences that are not yet judgments

but which deserve to be given theoretical recognition, it should not be too costly to further accept nonconceptuality as part of the cognitive process. The admission of such a commitment would be the first sign of compromise between the two opposing camps. He further admits that there is really an aspect of our perceptual experience that is not immediately subsumable by the human conceptual ability, yet he stops short of going further to give his consent to nonconceptuality. He claims that this aspect of our experience cannot really serve the need for nonconceptuality or cognition proper because the fine-grained experience is still indeterminate to conceptual capacity and its utility is marred by the necessity of what he calls demonstrative thought which allows us to pick out the features of our experience for which we otherwise lack concepts.

A perceptual-demonstrative thought, to McDowell, is the most atomic form of human perceptual experience. Such a thought, contrary to the nonconceptualist view, is demonstrable because it is able to refer to or distinguish a feature of perceptual experience. An example of this is a perceiver uttering the phrase "that shade" and pointing out an aspect of his perceptual experience. Such a perceptual-demonstrative thought, McDowell argues, cannot be non-conceptual since demonstration requires having some concepts. In other words, it already presupposes that the perceiver must possess, at least, a general concept like "shade" to be able to achieve such recognition of experience. Given this analysis, nobody would be able to appreciate his/her perceptual states or has any true knowledge of "that shade" in his/her representational content unless he/she possesses such general concepts. He contends that it is hopeless trying to classify that aspect of one's perceptual experience as nonconceptual since it is demonstrable in thought. Whatever is demonstrable in thought, McDowell contends, is necessarily conceptual and as such already has some basic concepts enough to capture the experience.

The introduction of the notion of demonstrative thought/concepts by McDowell obstructs what should have been a straightforward compromise between the conceptualist and nonconceptualist. However, if our argument could show that these basic general concepts in demonstrative thought are no different from specific nonconceptual experience, then the differences are dissolved. Does the perceptual demonstrativeness of an experience really presuppose conceptual ability and preclude nonconceptuality? Or does the ability to demonstrably recognize a feature of one's perceptual experience denote the knowledge of a nonconceptual experience?

One challenge that such a perceptual demonstrative thought must explain is the experience of its fleeting nature. McDowell (Brandom 2000) himself points out that one of the conditions necessary for possessing a genuine conceptual capacity is that "the very same capacity to embrace a colour in mind can persist beyond the duration of the experience itself...if only for a short time." This means that the capacity to identify something as an instance of a particular feature by means of a demonstrative expression cannot be isolated from the experience in which the demonstration was first exercised. McDowell admits that the capacity for recognition endures just for a "short time" and that this shall count as a sufficient duration for a recognitional capacity. But we need to note that if the capacity on which McDowell wants us to rely disappears immediately after the removal of the original sample, then there will be no reason to think that an utterance or thought of "that shade" will

have the sort of conceptual content which he insists they do. If the capacity fails to last long enough to facilitate identification of other samples as exemplifying the feature in question, then we cannot take McDowell's account seriously.

McDowell's account of demonstrative concepts cannot endure for long after the removal of the original sample, not long enough to suppose that the recognitional capacity is at work. Recognition, in the sense McDowell employs it, is a product of a mere chance and that may not justify having the concept truly. For example, if the subject is faced with two cans, which contain paints of similar but not identical shades, it is doubtful that the demonstrative abilities of which McDowell speaks would be of any use in determining which is the correct shade to purchase. But, perhaps after the appropriate training, one could acquire the ability to discriminate between certain shades without a sample being present. However, this may not be of help to McDowell, for we continue to have experiences with determinate features even in the absence of such training.

CONCLUSION

Concepts are acquired gradually and conceptual capacity develops as experiences are accumulated. As the subject acquires experiences, the horizon of his conceptual capacity increases. Hence, all experience is not spontaneously and immediately captured at once and vanishes afterwards. There is always a leftover, an after-effect in memory, that is either a nonconceptual duration or a specific conceptual duration, or both in a given visual field. In fact, the act of conceptualization follows a gradual process. As human experiences accumulate, derived concepts form a building block for the subject which further enhances his/her ability to conceptualize other experiences. So, at every instance of perception, there is a likelihood of nonconceptuality as forming a part of the process of cognition.

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ETHICS OF BUSINESS ADS DIRECTED AT CHILDREN*

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This essay shows why children advertising or business ads directed at children cannot be justified on moral grounds. It is argued that while the persuasive intent of business ads in general does not always lead to the manipulation of consumers, children's yet undeveloped or general lack of the capacity to make autonomous, rational, or free and informed buying decisions renders business ads directed at them necessarily manipulative. Accordingly, it is when ads are manipulative that they are unethical. And the absence of an internal mechanism in children to guard themselves against the possible manipulations of the ads directed at them renders the persuasive techniques of these ads as ways of taking advantage of their vulnerability.

INTRODUCTION

The ubiquity of business ads in our society and their undeniable significant effects on the preferences, decisions, lifestyles, and well-being of consumers render such ads as an appropriate object of ethical evaluation. As it still ultimately rests on the decisions of consumers whether or not to patronize these ads, the usual arguments for and against the ethics of these ads revolve around the question on whether or not these ads violate the autonomy of consumers or, more particularly, whether they enable or prevent consumers to make rational decisions on what goods to buy. Still another way of putting the question is, given the preferences, needs, goals, and financial capacity of consumers, do business ads help consumers make buying decisions that are in their best interests, or do these ads simply manipulate consumers thereby taking advantage of the weaknesses or vulnerability of these consumers to advance the economic interests of the companies whose products these ads are promoting?

A significant type of business advertising, however, does not seem to be directly addressed by the usual type of arguments used to address the said question. This particular type of advertising refers to children advertising or to business advertising whose target consumers are children; and the reason why these arguments appear tangential to the ethical evaluation of children advertising is that they work on the premise that consumers already have the capacity to make autonomous and rational (or free and informed) decisions on which goods to prefer or buy, which children do not have yet or have not yet developed. Among others, children do not have clear concepts of money, of reality as opposed to fantasy, of what they want in the future, and of what will be good for them in the long run;

and this condition makes them vulnerable to the persuasive techniques of business ads directed at them.

This essay thus tries to bridge the gap between the traditional way by which the ethics of advertising is evaluated and the need to evaluate the ethics of children advertising. It situates children advertising in the traditional universe of discourse on the ethics of advertising, while at the same time exploring other moral considerations that can also serve as a framework for its ethical evaluation. The discussion is divided into four parts. The first discusses the purposes and kinds of ads. The second discusses the moral concept of autonomy. The third looks into the debate on whether business ads violate the autonomy of consumers. And the fourth relates such debate to the case of business ads directed at children and further explores the ethical dimensions of such ads. On the whole, the essay concludes that children advertising cannot be justified on moral grounds.

INFLUENCE AND PERSUASIVE INTENT OF BUSINESS ADVERTISING

The strong influence of advertising on the buying decisions of consumers cannot be denied. This, for instance, is assumed and acknowledged in the legal controversy over ads involving infant formula in our country that happened sometime in July of 2007. Such controversy concerns a revision made by the Department of Health (DOH) on a provision in the Milk Code of the Philippines (*Philippine Daily Inquirer* 2007, A1 & A6; and *Philippine Star News* 2007, 7). Previously, the said code stipulated that infant formula ads could only be directed at children aged one year old and above. What the DOH did was to change the age component of the provision to two years old and above. As this change was perceived to have a significant effect on the sales of infant formula, its legality was questioned by the Pharmaceutical and Health Care Association of the Philippines (PHAP).

DOH argued that the revision was an integral part of their program to strengthen their campaign in promoting the practice of breastfeeding. Based on their studies, every year since 1986, the number of mothers breastfeeding their children has been decreasing while the rate of infant mortality due to malnutrition has been increasing. The lawyers of the PHAP protested that the DOH revision was illegal on the ground that only Congress has the right to make revisions in the Milk Code. Furthermore, they argued that their own studies contradict the DOH claim that there has been a significant decrease in the number of mothers breastfeeding their infants. But more importantly, they contended that the DOH revision would result in heavy profit losses for corporations into the business of producing and selling infant formula. This legal case was elevated to the Supreme Court, which eventually ruled in favor of the DOH position. Be it as it may, this legal controversy has surely highlighted a social reality that protagonists from both sides of the case acknowledge, that business ads, such as those of infant formula, are highly effective in influencing the decisions of consumers in buying certain products.

Business advertising is often viewed as having a dual function. On the one hand, it can be seen as a means by which consumers are informed of the products (goods and services) that are available in the market. In this regard, assuming that ads give truthful, objective, and balanced information about the products that they promote, ads can help consumers decide rationally on what goods to buy given their needs, preferences, financial status, and allotted budget for a certain type of shopping. The more choices consumers have, the more voluntary and informed their buying decisions will be. On the other hand,

however, advertising can also be seen as a means by which businessmen and corporations lure consumers to buy their products. The end goal of business after all is to make profit and profit can only be made if the consumers buy; and so businesses advertise their products to make consumers buy these products.

These two types of function of business advertising are also present in nonbusiness types of advertising. For instance, when a government institution (say the military) advertises for available job positions or when a university advertises for available teaching positions, it does so to inform potential applicants of the availability of such positions, but at the same time it does so to attract the best applicants or to persuade the highly qualified to apply for such positions. Based on the two general functions of advertising, namely to provide information and to persuade, advertising is often distinguished into the *informative* and the *persuasive* types. This distinction, however, is only clear theoretically for in actual practice, or at the bottom of it, advertising is essentially persuasive, for the provision of information is itself motivated by the goal to persuade. Accordingly, the informative type of advertising is not in contrast with the persuasive type but a technique of advertising that is essentially persuasive.

The persuasive nature of advertising is, of course, especially true and well pronounced in the business type of advertising. Here, the information given to consumers regarding the products available in the market and the information given about these products—say their uses, benefits, and advantages over other products—are clearly just a means by which companies persuade consumers to buy their products. This is highlighted by the fact that these products are not just presented to the consumers but are presented to them in ways that appeal to their needs and desires. Consequently, when we henceforth speak of advertising or ads we shall mean advertising of the business type which we shall regard as necessarily persuasive in intent.

Ads use a variety of techniques and strategies in persuading consumers to buy the products they promote; and based on these strategies, ads are classified into certain types. For us to have a clearer understanding of how persuasive ads work, let us examine the four popular types of business ads; namely, *associative advertising*, *puffery*, *mass advertising*, and *subliminal advertising*.

Associative advertising utilizes the persuasive technique of associating a product to a certain nonmaterial need. There is a wide variety of nonmaterial needs, which include the needs for power, health, knowledge, relationships, success, sense of belongingness, recognition, fame, peace of mind, and spirituality, that a product can be associated with. In the Philippines, for example, it is usual to promote a product by showing that it enables us to achieve some cultural values such as the bonding of family members. Soft drink and other food products (hamburgers, for instance) are shown to promote bonding among family members. Liquors are often advertised by showing that their consumption facilitates the bonding among male friends (the parenthetical remark in question here is deleted). Cigarettes are often advertised by associating their use with being cool. And successful people in various fields are shown to attribute their success by their use of certain products—which often do not actually have anything to do with their fields, such as the use of a certain brand of coffee by a successful television personality.

In *puffery*, the persuasive technique exaggerates the positive qualities of a certain product. Certain brands of milk show children who drink them to be very intelligent. A laundry soap is shown to be capable of whitening a very dirty white shirt as if it were just

recently bought. The use of a deodorant by a man is shown to drive women of all types crazy over him. An amusing ad shows a grandmother developing the ability to dance ballet with the same grace and agility as her granddaughter after drinking a particular brand of adult milk. Also included are juices that are advertised as purely natural when they are not, and foods that are advertised to give health benefits when they actually do not. Though some forms of puffery are entertaining, most, however, lead to deceptive advertising for giving false information or unrealistic expectations to the consumers.

The third is called *mass advertising*, where the persuasive technique used is the mere repetition of ads. The repetitious showing of ads is believed to have an indirect effect on the consciousness of the consumers, such that even if the consumers do not particularly like the ads, these ads will enter into their consciousness that they may find themselves patronizing the products promoted. This indirect effect is manifested in the immediate recall of the product by consumers in moments of impulsive buying. Ads on billboards located on thoroughfares are good examples of this type of ads. And who will not notice the ads so repetitiously being advertised on local television during major boxing fights?

The fourth is called *subliminal advertising*, where ads appear in the background of something else which consumers enjoy seeing or hearing. Examples are the products indirectly advertised by popular athletes while playing their games like in the shoes, caps, and shirts that they wear, and by actors while playing characters in a movie like in the cell phones and cars that they use. Needless to say, one particular ad may be classified under more than one of these types for utilizing various persuasive techniques at the same time.

HUMAN AUTONOMY AND BUSINESS ADS

Human autonomy is generally understood as referring to the capacity of humans to make independent decisions. Existentialists would like to put this as our capacity to make our own choices. From the moral point of view, it however refers to the capacity of humans to make *free* and *informed* decisions (which is sometimes summarily referred to as the capacity to make *rational* decisions). Accordingly, humans are independent in their decisions in so far as they arrived at these in a voluntary manner, meaning not being forced or coerced by some external forces; and in an informed manner, that is, using one's own or freely chosen standards and in consideration of the relevant factors involved. In this light, when we say that human autonomy is violated or disrespected, we mean that this capacity to make free and informed decisions is undermined. Violating a person's autonomy in particular would mean making the choices for the person, or making the person act on choices he does not personally make, which is done either through coercion or manipulation. (Existentialists also speak of voluntarily allowing other persons to make the choices for us—that it is our choice for others to make the choices for us).

Existential philosophers like Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre discuss human autonomy in relation to making one's life truly or authentically human. On the other hand, Immanuel Kant discusses it in relation to morality. For Kant, an act that violates human autonomy is morally wrong and he specifies the conditions under which violation of human autonomy occurs. Kant (1969, 54) formulates his moral principle (known as the "categorical imperative") in various ways, one of which is the principle of *respect for persons* which clearly provides a proper framework for explaining the moral wrongfulness of violating human autonomy. According to this moral principle, *a person ought not to be treated merely*

as a means but always also as an end as well. This principle is built on a fundamental difference between persons and nonpersons, in that persons are free and rational while nonpersons are not. In this consideration, treating persons in the manner appropriate to them, which respects their freedom and rationality, is tantamount to treating them as ends; while treating persons in the manner not appropriate to them is tantamount to treating them as nonpersons or merely as means. Consequently, an action that treats persons merely as means is morally wrong while an action that treats them as ends as well is morally good.

Since making a person act on choices not truly his own is clearly a case of using him merely as a means, then violating a person's autonomy is morally wrong. A concrete way of determining whether one violates the autonomy of other persons is to consider whether the action one performs towards these other persons is something to which they would give their *voluntary and informed consent*. If it is an action to which they would *not* give their voluntary consent, it means that such action is forced on them or that they are coerced to accept such action and, hence, such action does not respect their freedom; while if it is an action to which they would not give their informed consent, it means that there is some deception involved and, hence, such action does not respect their rationality.

After examining the concept of human autonomy and how it can be violated, let us now inquire into the ways in which business ads violate the autonomy of consumers. There are two possible ways. One is that if ads cause consumers to buy certain products in a way that is not free and rational, or in a manner they have not voluntarily and rationally consented to buy. We earlier noted that ads are inherently persuasive; but though persuasion is not inherently morally wrong, it can lead to either coercion or manipulation; and it is when ads manipulate or coerce consumers that they violate their autonomy. Before we proceed, it will be helpful at this point to clarify the differences among *persuasion*, *manipulation*, and *coercion*. For this task, let us refer to Beauchamp's own clarifications of these concepts. To begin with, Beauchamp (1993, 476) explains that

...coercion occurs if one party deliberately and successfully uses force or a credible threat of unwanted, avoidable, and serious harm in order to compel a particular response from another person. No matter how attractive or overwhelming an offer, coercion is not involved unless a threatening negative sanction is presented.

On the other hand, he (1993, 476) describes persuasion as "... a deliberate and successful attempt by one person to encourage another to freely accept beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions through appeals to reason. The first person offers what he or she believes to be good reasons for accepting the desired perspective." Finally, he (1993, 477-78) understands manipulation as "... a broad category that includes any successful attempt to elicit a desired response from another person by noncoercively modifying choices available to that person or by nonpersuasively altering another person's perceptions of available choices." Beauchamp regards the word "manipulation" as a general term that covers various forms of influences that lie between coercion and persuasion, such as incentives, strong offers, indoctrination, propaganda, emotional pressure, irrational persuasion, temptation, seduction, and deception.

Beauchamp clarifies that while coercion, which is a form of influence that includes force or the threat of harm, can exist in advertising, it is however so rare that it should no longer be considered an issue. Beauchamp (1993, 476) gives as an example of coercive advertising the ad that is "directed at a starving population that 'offer' food and medical attention in return for marketable blood, as allegedly was done by Plasma International." For Beauchamp, this ad constitutes a threat and not a mere offer, and so is coercive. The critical distinction is between persuasion and manipulation, for as business ads are inherently persuasive they can be manipulative at times. In this regard, Beauchamp (1993, 478) further clarifies the distinction between persuasion and manipulation as follows:

The major difference between informational manipulation and persuasion is that the former involves deception used to influence a person's choice or action, whereas persuasion is not based on deception. In being influenced by information, persuasion is an attempt to get one to believe what is correct, sound, or backed by good reasons. Manipulation is an attempt to induce one to believe what is not correct, unsound, or not backed by good reasons.

In sum, following Beauchamp, we see manipulation as lying between coercion and persuasion. For, on the one hand, coercion and manipulation both influence consumers to make decisions not truly their own (or make irrational decisions or decisions not in their best interests) but coercion does it with force or the threat of harm while manipulation does it by means of deception. On the other hand, manipulation and persuasion both do not use force or the threat of harm but manipulation use deceptive techniques and so necessarily intends to make consumers make irrational decisions while persuasion does not necessarily use deceptive techniques and so does not necessarily intend to make consumers make irrational decisions. These clarifications show that it is when advertising becomes manipulative that it violates the autonomy of consumers and as such is morally wrong.

The second way by which ads can violate the autonomy of consumers is when ads curtail or serve as a hindrance to the development of the capacity of consumers to make free and rational buying decisions. Lippke (1993, 591) puts this as follows: "Advertising suppresses autonomy by discouraging the emergence of its constitutive skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivations." The difference between this way and the first one is that the first way speaks of a direct violation of autonomy of consumers, while this second one speaks of the curtailment of the development and exercise of the capacity for autonomy. Making consumers act on decisions not their own is as unethical as preventing them from acting on their own decisions. It will later be argued that this second way is what directly applies to children as targets of business ads.

DO ADS VIOLATE THE AUTONOMY OF CONSUMERS?

Let us now examine some of the arguments advanced to reject and support the view that business advertising violates the autonomy of consumers. Let us begin with Robert Arrington (1993, 578) who contends that while advertising may in fact sometimes violate human autonomy, it is however innocent of the charge that it inherently violates the autonomy of consumers. Arrington's strategy is to first identify the conditions under which advertising can be said to violate human autonomy and then to show that these conditions are not

necessarily or always true. Arrington identifies four of these conditions which we shall now examine one by one.

The first condition states that ads violate human autonomy if these give rise to *nonnatural* needs in the consumers (Arrington 1993, 579). Accordingly, when we see or hear an ad and as a result we desire to buy the product that it promotes the question is whether our desire to buy the product natural in us or is merely created in us by the ad itself. If this desire is not natural in us and is merely created by the ad, then this ad violates our autonomy. Arrington advances two arguments showing that this is not necessarily the case. One argument follows F. A. von Hayek (1979, 508-12) in invoking the idea that most of our desires that ads appeal to, to begin with, are *culturally induced*, and hence are not natural to us. Thus, if, for instance, we desire a certain product because of its aesthetic properties, the argument claims that this desire is not necessarily created in us by the ad because our desire for what is beautiful is culturally induced; and, as such, the desire for the beautiful product is therefore just a mere expression of our culturally-induced desire for what is beautiful.

The other argument, on the other hand, invokes the distinction made by Harry Frankfurt (1971, 5-20) between *first-order* and *second-order* desires. A first-order desire to buy a certain product may or may not have a second-order desire, that is, the desire to pursue the first-order desire. And accordingly, if such first-order desire has a second-order desire, it is considered natural, otherwise it is nonnatural. But since it is sometimes the case that our desire to buy a certain product resulting from an exposure to an ad passes through a second-order desire, Arrington then argues that it is not therefore always the case that ads create nonnatural desires in us.

The second condition is that ads violate human autonomy if ads serve as a means by which the buying decisions of consumers will be rendered involuntary or unfree (Arrington 1993, 579-81) as manifested in cases of impulsive buying. Arrington, however, clarifies that a consumer's buying decision is not free only if the consumer has no reasons for making such decision, as what precisely happens in impulsive buying. Arrington then argues that it is not the case that consumers always do not have reasons why they would desire to buy certain products. There are cases where they do have reasons why they make their buying decisions, and in those cases their decisions are voluntary.

The third condition is that ads violate human autonomy if they cause consumers to make irrational buying decisions, which are understood as decisions not based on sufficient information about the products endorsed by ads. Arrington counters that if by "sufficient information" about a product we mean knowledge of all data about a product, then many of our other decisions in life will be rendered irrational as well; for obviously we do not always make a decision on something with knowledge of all the data about the object in question. "Sufficient knowledge" here, according to Arrington, is meaningful only if construed as referring to "knowledge of the relevant facts," where relevance has a subjective meaning—that is, when what is relevant to a person depends on his own needs, beliefs, and priorities in life. In this light, the rationality of a consumer's buying decision will depend on whether what he makes as the bases for his buying decision are those that are valuable to him. Consequently, Arrington argues that it is not true that ads always cause consumers to make irrational buying decisions, for there are cases where consumers base their buying decisions on factors valuable to them.

And the fourth condition is that ads violate human autonomy if they manipulate or control the buying decisions of consumers. Arrington (1993, 582-84) claims that this is only true under conditions that ads *do intend* consumers to buy the products they endorse and they *ensure* that all the necessary conditions for consumers to actually buy these products obtain. Arrington holds that to begin with ads do not really intend but only *hope* that consumers will buy the products they endorse. Moreover, it is simply not true that ads ensure all the necessary conditions for consumers to buy certain products obtain; rather, they only *hope* that given their persuasive techniques consumers will actually buy the products they endorse.

On the whole, Arrington (1993, 583-84) argues that while it is true that advertising sometimes violate human autonomy, there is no truth in the charge that advertising *inherently, always, or necessarily* violates human autonomy. In the language of Beauchamp, Arrington's position is tantamount to saying that advertising is not always manipulative. So just like any other human activity, advertising may or may not be ethical depending on the conditions in which it is done.

Let us now examine another take on the issue, that of Richard Lippke (1993, 587-88), who makes a fundamental distinction between the *explicit* and *implicit content* of ads. According to Lippke, the explicit content of ads refers to products that ads are endorsing directly while their implicit content refers to a lifestyle that ads are indirectly promoting (i.e., the so-called "consumer lifestyle") which consists of certain beliefs, attitudes, practices, and aspirations in life. If in terms of their explicit content the message of these ads is "buy x," in terms of their implicit content, on the other hand, the message is "this lifestyle suits you" or that "you are better off with this lifestyle." Now the implicit content is intended to provide the necessary context or background for patronage of the explicit content. That is to say, as our preferred lifestyle greatly influences our decisions in life, the consumerist lifestyle that we knowingly or unknowingly adopt as a result of our exposure to ads creates in us the predisposition to buy products promoted by ads. Lippke then uses this distinction between the explicit and implicit contents of ads as a framework for criticizing the defense of Arrington for advertising. Lippke (1993, 589) writes:

Even if we accept his arguments as stated, Arrington's defense of advertising is seriously incomplete. He ignores the very possibility that it violates autonomy not by manipulating persons' desires and choices with respect to particular products, but by suppressing their capacities to make rational choices about the implicit content of ads.

For Lippke, it is the beliefs and values on which consumers base their buying decisions that are the target of the implicit content of ads. As such, given that ads are successful in promoting their implicit content the upshot is that the freedom consumers seem to have in their buying decisions is actually a sham. A consumer may refuse to buy a product that a particular ad endorses but often this is because he desires another product that is endorsed by another ad (consider the fact that sometimes rival products are both products of the same company). We will recall that for Arrington it is only when advertising is done under the conditions that he identified that it violates human autonomy. The upshot of Lippke's analysis is that even in cases where Arrington thinks that advertising does not violate human autonomy it still actually does violate human autonomy.

The consumer lifestyle is what is popularly known as “consumerism,” where the beautiful, happy, and successful life is measured in terms of the capacity to purchase, avail of, and use modern and high-quality products and services. This lifestyle serves as the background or sets the stage for the buying decisions of consumers. Some consumers obviously cannot afford the products that they desire; nonetheless, to buy these products remains to be their goal in life. Lippke argues that the suppression of the autonomy of consumers by ads through their implicit content is clearly shown by the fact that business ads do not promote or are antithetical to critical thinking. And this is for the following three reasons (Lippke 1993, 590-94).

First, ads do not give consumers the chance to objectively weigh the negative and positive features of the products they endorse, for ads only show the positive features of these products, which they often do in an exaggerated way. Second, ads often appeal to our emotions and discourage logical and discriminating thinking. As Lippke (1993, 591) observes: “Ads subtly encourage the propensity to accept emotional appeals, oversimplification, superficiality, and shoddy standards of proof for claims.” And third, ads do not present the alternative lifestyles to consumerism. As Lippke (1993, 592) points out:

Lifestyle contrary to consumption are either absent from ads (and from TV shows) or ridiculed in them....Opposition lifestyles are saddled with a burden of justification. Those who resist the easy gratifications of the consumer marketplace are likely to be perceived as square, eccentric, boring, or life-denying.

In sum, critical thinking cannot develop in a context where the positive and negative sides to an issue are not objectively presented or are not accessible, when emotional appeal is valued over logical thinking, and when competing alternatives are not given equal opportunity to present and defend themselves. And the world of advertising, argues Lippke, is one such context.

CASE OF CHILDREN ADS

Needless to say, children are also consumers whose desires and preferences are influenced by business ads, but unlike most adult consumers it is usually the parents of these children who pay for the products the children desire to have. Following Lynn Sharp Paine (1993, 609), we shall understand “children” to be those aged eight years old and below. Because of the state of their biological development, children are not yet capable of making autonomous, or free and rational/informed, decisions. Paine (1993, 612-13) explains that this is because they do not yet have a clear understanding of the concepts necessary for making autonomous decisions, namely the concepts of the *self*, *time*, and *money*.

With regard to the concept of the self, children do not know yet or have not yet decided on what their future plans are and their priorities in life. With regard to their concept of time, children are still limited to the momentary and the immediate future and thus have no idea of the difference between the short term and the long term. And with regard to their concept of money, they do not yet know the difference between the cheap and the expensive

and have no idea about budget or allotment of money. In the context of choosing products (for their parents) to buy, this would mean that children would not yet know which products will actually be in their best interests; they would just choose those that immediately satisfy their wants; and they would just desire products regardless of whether or not their parents could afford them.

If children are not yet capable of autonomous decisions, how do children figure in the ethical evaluation of business ads that mainly focus on human autonomy? We earlier noted that ads violate the autonomy of consumers when they manipulate the desires of consumers such that their buying decisions are not truly theirs. Arrington, it will be recalled, argued that ads do not always do so; while Lippke contends that Arrington has only addressed the explicit content of ads and that even in moments that consumers do not seem to be manipulated by these ads they actually are, for their choices are still manipulated by the implicit content of these ads. We also noted that ads violate the autonomy of consumers when they are prevented from developing and exercising their capacity for autonomy. Now, as children do not have or have not yet developed the capacity to make autonomous decisions, the ads directed at them are necessarily manipulative and, hence, are necessarily unethical. There are, at least, three identifiable reasons for this, which we shall examine in what follows.

First, it is given that *the persuasive intent of business ads is geared towards the promotion of the economic interests of advertising companies and the companies that own the products the ads promote*. For adult consumers, since they already have the capacity to weigh whether these ads are also in their best interests, the persuasive intent of these ads do not necessarily lead to manipulation. But in the case of children, since they do not have yet such capacity, the persuasive intent of the ads necessarily leads to manipulation. Of course, the parents of these children also make decisions for them but the intent of parents in persuading their children is often for the best interests of the latter. Second, on closer inspection, it is actually the children who are especially vulnerable to the implicit content of ads or to the promotion of the consumerist lifestyle, for it is actually at the level of children where the internalization of this lifestyle begins, which they will carry with them as they become adults and are already capable of making autonomous decisions. And third, as Lippke noted, ads do not promote or are antithetical to the practice of critical thinking.

Paine likewise identifies three moral principles that children ads violate, which further strengthen the point that children advertising is necessarily manipulative. The first is the *principle of truth*. As children do not have yet a clear idea of what differentiates reality from fantasy, they are likely to regard the exaggerations and deceptions of ads as real. Consequently, ads create in children false and unrealistic beliefs about what the advertised products can do. Paine (1993, 622) puts this as follows:

To the extent that children develop false beliefs and unrealistic expectations as a result of viewing commercials, moral reservations about children's advertising are justified. To the extent advertisers know that children develop false beliefs and unreasonable expectations, advertisers' devotion to truth and to responsible consumption is suspect.

The second is the *principle of respect for the personhood of children* (Paine 1993, 622-23). This ties up with our discussion of Kant's moral principle of respect for persons.

Because children are not yet capable of giving their voluntary and informed consent to the products endorsed by ads directed at them, children are therefore treated as nonpersons or as mere means to satisfy the profit motive of the corporations behind these ads. If the persuasive nature of business ads in general can sometimes lead to manipulation, children ads are always or are necessarily manipulative. Children ads take advantage of the vulnerability of children for these ads are primarily geared towards the promotion of the business interests of corporations and not of the interests of children.

And the third is the *principle of avoiding pain or harm*. As identified by Paine (1993, 623-24), the harm that children ads bring about include the following: the conflict between children and parents on whether to buy the products desired by children as a result of being exposed to ads; the depression and hatred of children against their parents when their parents are unable or refuse to buy the products that they desire as a result of being exposed to ads; the frustration of children after finding out that the advertised features of products do not happen in reality; the sorrow experienced by children when they see lifestyles portrayed by children in ads that their own families cannot afford; and the pain that parents feel when they cannot satisfy the desire of their children for certain products as a result of being exposed to ads.

Paine (1993, 618-19) explains that parents are often confused about showing their love for their children in light of the desire of their children for the products endorsed by ads they are exposed to. On the one hand, parents want to make their children happy by giving them things they desire. But on the other hand, parents also want to buy things that they think are good for their children. The problem is that the things desired by their children are sometimes not the things parents think are good for them. And this confusion, to a large extent, is likewise the doing of ads directed at children. An interesting movie depicting how a parent's love for his or her child can be defined by ads is the movie "Jingle All the Way" (1996, 20th Century Fox). Here the father (played by the actor Arnold Schwarzenegger) did everything to buy the toy that his son so desired (which his son had seen for a number of times being advertised on television); and he became desperate when he was unable to for fear that he would lose the love of his son. Luckily there was a chance for the father to play the role of the character of the toy in a parade, which more than made up for his failure to buy the toy.

It shall be observed that the first two moral principles identified by Paine are deontological in nature (for they basically concern motives and rights) whereas the third one is consequentialist (for considering the outcomes of an action, practice, or policy). What this shows is that children advertising is morally unacceptable from both deontological and consequentialist types of ethics.

CONCLUSION

What can be done to protect children from the undesirable effects of ads directed at them? This question involves various stakeholders: the businessmen and corporations behind these ads, for they have the power to control the content of these ads; the government, for they have the power to control what ads would be allowed to be shown to or heard by the public; the parents, for they have the power to control the exposure of their children to ads and to guide their children in terms of how to properly react to these ads; and the educational system, for its power to influence and cultivate the consciousness and disposition of children.

Advertising is already an integral part of the fabric that makes up our present society and it is no longer possible to eliminate it. An effective institutional mechanism to manage advertising may be the next best alternative, but this depends on the unlikely possibility that the business and government sectors would be willing to give up some of the economic benefits that they get from it (profits for the business sector while taxes for the government sector). In the meantime, what parents and educational institutions can do is to cultivate in children the necessary disposition that would enable children to protect themselves from the undesirable effects of ads directed at them, namely the *ethical* and *critical* dispositions. In addition, parents need to expose their children to lifestyles, such as the religious lifestyle, that will check the excesses of the consumerist lifestyle that ads promote implicitly but vigorously.

NOTE

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PHILOSOPHY IN CULTURE: EMBEDDED AND DISEMBEDDED¹

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Philosophy is here viewed broadly as a label or name that transcends the quarrels of diverse philosophical schools which attempt to exclude one another from this label. It is argued that philosophy emerges from one's culture as it does not exist in a vacuum; it emerges from the people's experiences of joy and pain, doubt and certainty, and so on. It is manifested in a person's reflections of the time, locally or globally, or in the people's language(s), songs, myths, riddles, and the like. Though embedded in one's culture, it can be disembedded from that culture by an ethnophilosopher or by a historian/scholar of philosophy. Once disembedded, philosophy may turn around and try to critique that culture in order to refine it.

INTRODUCTION

In line with my training in the analytic tradition, I want to dwell on the meaning of “emergence” as used in the theme of the Roundtable Panel Discussion, “Philosophy Emerging from South and Southeast Asian Cultures.” That is to say, “In what sense does philosophy emerge from culture?” The theme, of course, is a subtheme of the 22nd World Congress of Philosophy, viz., “Rethinking Philosophy Today.” Having said that, I will simply assume that we do understand what we mean by “culture” and that we accept the premise that all schools of philosophy—the analytic, existential, pragmatic, etc., despite their quarrels—do emerge from culture. This premise is also in line with my orientation as a historian of Filipino philosophy.² The historian of philosophy attempts to transcend the quarrels where one school of philosophy defines philosophy by excluding the other schools and vice versa, and the historian simply considers all these schools as themselves philosophies. It is in this regard that I will speak of “philosophy,” that is, all types or schools of philosophy, including their respective techniques or methods, as emerging from culture. To define philosophy in one way in contemporary times is to exclude other types of philosophy and it appears counterproductive to do so in our investigation of philosophy emerging from culture.³ Again, to reiterate our question, “In what sense is philosophy said to emerge from culture?”

NOTION OF EMERGENCE

To emerge is to be, that is, to stand out from a source or ground, which, in the case of philosophy, is culture itself. In delivery, the baby is said to emerge from the the mother's womb. But the baby is an object, a thing, an entity. Can we say the same of philosophy? Is philosophy a thing or an entity like a worm that emerges from its cocoon and flies out as a butterfly, saying, "Hey, I am philosophy, I have emerged from my cocoon. Say 'hello!' to me." There are occasions, of course, in the history of philosophy where a concept is personified. Boethius (1969), for example, personified *philosophy* in his book, *The consolation of Philosophy*, where he conversed with Philosophy as to the nature of his disease that led to his imprisonment. And Philosophy answered that his malady is from having forgotten the ways of God and she eventually led Boethius back to the ways of God. There is a counterpart of this personification of a concept in Filipino philosophy. Emilio Jacinto (see Gripaldo 2001, 30-31), one of the revolutionists, personified *liberty* in one of his works. A Filipino youth sought the advice of Liberty regarding the nature of the disease of the situation. Liberty said to the youth that in the past his brethren embraced and loved her. But when Slavery (Spanish colonization) in the form of beauty, civilization, prosperity, etc., came, they embraced her and forgot all about Liberty. Liberty advised the youth to embrace and love her again, but for a price: it should be done through a bloody revolution.

I am not sure at this point in the discussion that philosophy is an entity or a thing, although the analogy of personification is helpful.

If we trace the origin of the term "philosophy," we notice that it simply means "love of wisdom." For Pythagoras (see Chroust 1964) the wisdom of man is derived from the wisdom of God. Only God is truly wise; in fact, God is Wisdom. Therefore, the philosopher can only be a friend or lover of wisdom. It is perhaps unfortunate that historians of philosophy did not give the honorific title, "Father of Philosophy," to Pythagoras but to Thales. The reason is that the very question that Pythagoras tried to answer was the same question which Thales earlier raised, "What is the basic stuff of the universe?"

HISTORIAN OF PHILOSOPHY

Notice the pivotal role of the historian of philosophy. He is a very important actor here. Not only that the historian transcends the quarrels of philosophers as to which is the authentic type of philosophy, but he also determines which works or ideas are philosophical and which are not.⁴ Not all thinkers are philosophers, of course. Scientists are thinkers and so are poets and novelists, but only very few of them are philosophers.

Philosophical Content

How does a historian determine a philosophical content? A philosophical content is fundamentally a content of a cultural experience. The person as an individual entity lives and grows within a given culture. What is the historian's yardstick in deciphering a philosophical content of a cultural experience?

If we review the history of philosophy, we will see that reflective thinkers were concerned with addressing speculative or logical questions that arose from their cultural milieu, locally or globally, regarding—among other philosophical themes—the *nature* and *purpose* of things, of the state, of life, of thought, and so on. These reflective ideas or thoughts were articulated and written down if not by the thinker himself, then by his followers or students. This body of writings, or written texts, assumes the form of an entity, and is then studied and dissected by a philosophy historian, or anyone interested in philosophical studies, as to what kinds of content are embedded therein. Using a yardstick derived or discerned from past works considered philosophical, the historian separates the philosophical ideas or texts from the nonphilosophical. Philosophical ideas, as contents of experiential (first person) or empirical (third person) experiences, are indeed culturally grounded.⁵ But as written manifestations of these thoughts, they are embedded in these works. It is, I think, in this sense that philosophy, as a principle or body of ideas,⁶ emerges from culture. The ideas, however, are mediated by written texts.⁷ And it is in this respect that philosophy should be identified and disembedded from the texts in order to appreciate and analyze it.

Yardstick of Philosophical Content

But again, what is this yardstick that the historian uses? Aristotle in the past wrote many works on the nature of the good life, the good state, the tragic, and so on. A librarian from Rhodes, Andronicus (see Chroust 1961), classified all these into ethics, politics, epistemology, logic, physics, etc., and the one which does not properly belong to any of the previous characterizations, he placed “after physics,” which later came down to us as metaphysics. From these works, and the previous works of Plato and other Greek thinkers, a philosophy historian can discern from a welter of texts available for analysis, which ideas can be considered philosophical and which are not. The classification of philosophical works in the past will serve as his yardstick for philosophical analysis. Philosophical questions differ from mere empirical questions. There is a difference between “What is life?” (scientific question) and “What is the nature or purpose of life?” (philosophical question).

PHILIPPINE PHILOSOPHICAL SETTING

If we apply this emergence to the Philippine setting, that is, how philosophy emerges from Philippine culture, there are two types of actor to be considered. I have already mentioned the philosophy historian/scholar. There is also the ethnophilosopher.

Filipino Historian of Philosophy

The Filipino historian of philosophy examines all works in the past which were written by Filipinos as reactions to a colonial culture that was felt generally as oppressive, exploitative, debasing, full of suffering, and so on. While these writings were usually considered only of historical and political value, it is the historian of

philosophy (or in some cases, a few Filipino independent scholars of philosophy) who discovered that a number of these writings were themselves also of philosophical value. Embedded in these cultural writings were the basic ideas of the 18th century European Enlightenment such as the primacy of reason, social contract theory, deistic belief, progress, human capacity to liberate oneself, and importance of education, among others. From the last two decades of the Spanish colonial period to the American and Japanese colonial settings, the philosophical culture that developed were basically political in nature with a few philosophical incursions on education, ethics, economics, and human or social rights. It is apparent that the philosophical cultural ground of Filipino reflective thinking was Western in orientation (see Gripaldo 2004a). This Western philosophical tradition became the dominant trajectory in the historical development of Filipino philosophy. After political independence in 1946, many Oriental philosophies (Japanese, Indian, and Chinese) were introduced to Philippine schools but these were basically expository and interpretative; only a few works contain some substantive comparative philosophical studies between aspects of Philippine institutions like the family and aspects of Oriental philosophy. At the same time, during this period (1946 up to the present), a number of philosophical positions emerged with deeper substantive contents and with stress on the present-future orientation in the sense of making a new “way in the desert” (Isa. 43:19), as in Esquivel Embuscado’s dissectionism, Cirilo Bautista’s theory on the poem, Claro Ceniza’s neo-Parmenidean metaphysics, and Gripaldo’s circumstantialism (see Gripaldo 2004b). Minor philosophical positions are also beginning to emerge in the writings of some Filipino teachers of philosophy, positions which are novel in the sense of taking a different direction from where the work originally took off. These developments in the Philippine philosophical landscape and in other such landscapes in Kampuchea, Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Iran, and other Asian countries have transformed the term “Oriental Philosophy” into “Eastern Philosophy”—a politically correct contrast to “Western Philosophy”—because of their Eastern cultural roots even when some or many of these philosophical ideas have Western philosophical origins or influences.

Ethnophilosopher

Finally, we have the ethnophilosopher.⁶ Ethnophilosophers can be philosophers of culture, those who philosophize on the nature of culture, the significance of culture to human existence (or to one’s life), the purpose of culture, cultural identity, cultural integrity, and suchlike. Philosophers of culture do not only seek to understand culture, but also to critique in order to improve it, or so that it can have a cultural integrity (see Sweet 2002).

However, there are people who are just ethnophilosophers or those who simply extract from cultural written and oral texts (folktales, folksongs, folksayings, folk epithets, riddles, languages and dialects, folk traditions and norms, and the like) to disembed philosophical implications, underpinnings, presuppositions, etc., in order to *understand* culture. Some ethnophilosophers even justify the practices of a particular culture and criticize critical philosophy as an outside distortion of culture—as causing harm to the pristine nature of that culture.

CONCLUSION

Philosophy, as a principle or a body of ideas, does not exist in a vacuum. It emerges from a cultural setting. It is embedded in the languages, philosophical literature, folklores, oral traditions, and the like of a given culture. It is a response to certain aberrations, doubts, anomalies, problems, joys, wonderment, needs, and suchlike of a person or a group of people. As such, it can be disembedded by a historian or scholar of philosophy or by an ethnophilosopher. It is probable that philosophy once disembedded, will turn around and—in the hands of a philosopher or ethnophilosopher—take a critical look at culture itself in order to improve and refine it.

NOTES

1. Paper delivered during the XXII World Congress of Philosophy at Seoul National University, South Korea, 30 July 2008.

2. Although I am a historian of Filipino philosophy, that history has yet to be written. What I have accomplished so far is an identification of some Filipino thinkers, together with a discussion of their respective philosophies, from the past to the present (see 2004a and 2004b).

3. The analytic tradition (search for truth and clarification of the meaning of words and sentences), e.g., earlier excludes speculative (not descriptive) metaphysics and even existentialism, or in general, Continental philosophy, as philosophy while Continental philosophy (search for the meaning of life, the proper interpretation of texts, and rejection of metanarratives) excludes likewise the concerns of analytic philosophy. A third group, the neopragmatists, define philosophy not as a search for truth but as a search for useful ideas. Aldo Tassi (1982) makes a categorization by saying that any concern for the search for truth, past or present, is a premodern mode of thinking, which preoccupies itself with the objective world and forgets about the subjective world. The new orientation on the search for the authentic meaning of life is the modern mode of thinking. It is unfortunate, however, that this focus on interiority and subjectivity has likewise neglected the objective world. One cannot live a meaningful life if the air he or she breathes and the water he or she drinks are polluted, when there is the existence of the threat of war, human annihilation, oppression, suffering, etc., in the objective world. The postmodern mode of thinking must, therefore, bring the subjective and the objective worlds together into a unity. The person must take care of his/her subjective self and concerns, but at the same time he/she must also take care of his/her environment or the objective world outside to make life completely worth living. It is in this sense that I am using the term “philosophy” as a unified concern that includes the subjective, the objective, and even the utilitarian (the pragmatic focus on utility or usefulness) concerns together.

4. The historian of philosophy considers the objective turn, the subjective turn, and the utilitarian turn as one philosophy that individually emerges from culture. The historian of philosophy is presumed to be both a good scholar and a good hermeneute.

5. See McLean [2001a, 75-102; 2001b, 193-218; first appeared in 1997; see also 2000] for an example of the development of this philosophical grounding from cultural experience in the case of civil society.

6. Generally, philosophy is a body of ideas that is systematic. In some cases, however, we may only have philosophical fragments that do not seem to form a system. Sometimes we only have a term like "political pragmatism," which to a Filipino philosopher, Manuel L. Quezon (see Gripaldo 1994, 19 and 24; 2004a, 100-101), means a pragmatic course of action to pursue and fight for an ideal goal but when obstacles are difficult to surmount, one must have an alternative that is doable and in the right direction towards obtaining that ideal goal. It is something that is *better than nothing*.

7. Oral literature and oral histories must be listened to, recorded, and many times transcribed. They are then interpreted to disembed or extract their philosophical contents. Even architectural ruins—construed as texts in actuality—images, or pictures must be interpreted to disembed philosophical meanings, if any.

8. The role of the ethnophilosopher supplements the role of a historian of philosophy. The ethnophilosopher can go as far back as the beginning of the development of Filipino tribal cultures and traditions. Some historians of philosophy include the works of ethnophilosophers as part of something like pre-historic philosophy.

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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This article introduces and discusses the philosophy of inclusion as a fundamental condition of social transformation mediated by inclusive education. Inclusion in opposition to exclusion or marginalization certainly provokes fresh thinking about our ways of being and of relating to one another. Inclusive principles highlight the social dimensions of learning and living together that reciprocally define the future of a pluralistic society. With social transformation as the end in view, education is hereby described as a process that is linked to the evolving realities of society. The evolution of the education system follows the changing situations of society. Consequently, schools are challenged to institutionalize inclusion as a wise education philosophy and policy.

INTRODUCTION

What we want to achieve with education must reflect what we have always longed for as a rational and free society. An enlightened and a free society is a function of allowing inclusive education to make an impact on society. Meaning to say, unless and until education is inclusive, education systems can hardly make an impact on the lives of people and ensure a sustainable future. Constitutive of that vision through a quality education is every society's improvement, in terms of availability of decent employment, competence of public officials, cultural understanding and harmony, and genuine prosperity. In short, education rightly understood bears the overall vision of an inclusive society.

The move towards inclusion is a necessary step towards the building of a free and just society. Making sense of social diversity through responsive education system is as ideal as practical in light of the social goal of inclusion. Thus, according to Jacques Delors (1996, 13), the Chairman of the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century: "In confronting the many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom, and social justice." That is to say, collaborative efforts must be made to do education right. For education, properly achieved as education for peaceful coexistence, becomes the necessary condition for positive social change.

The cultivation of our intellectual faculties must be widely extended, in function of the holistic development of society. Accordingly, education must be a dynamic source of relevant knowledge through inclusive practices in the interest of society. This includes enabling students to take an active role in the life of society, in terms of becoming veritable participants in deliberating and acting on issues. Henry Giroux (2002, 451) says it quite well:

Situating within a broader context of issues concerned with social responsibility, politics, and the dignity of human life, higher education should be engaged as a site that offers students the opportunity to involve themselves in the deepest problems of society, to acquire the knowledge, skills, and ethical vocabulary necessary for modes of critical dialogue and forms of broadened civic participation.

RETHINKING EDUCATION TODAY

In view of the UN Millennium Goal of Education for All in 2015, the UNESCO *International Conference on Education* was held in Geneva, Switzerland in November 2008 with the theme “Inclusive education (The way to the future).” The Conference was convened to specifically address the issues concerning the promotion of inclusive education as a key to establishing just societies. It was a historic event charting the roadmap to inclusive education. The Conference body accordingly enjoined UN member States to seek concrete actions to institutionalize inclusive education in their respective countries.

Rethinking education today is a philosophical imperative of educational evolution. We need to constantly think beyond the existing models of education to deal meaningfully with change. New realities call for new responsibilities. And our capacity for creativity enables us to face up to emerging new challenges. Self-reflection is central to the human dynamism for creativity, which increases our ability for personal and social renewal.

Renewal in education is essential, more than ever, in the whole process of learning how far we can be free within the evolving context of manifold relationships. This basically includes building on our strength and developing the necessary skills for peace-making. This surely poses the ideal of putting into practice the enduring value of education that has long shaped its humanistic orientation. The realization of the purpose of education is multi-faceted in that it covers a comprehensive area of development. Meaning, alongside education’s function of a holistic cultivation of everyone’s knowledge, skills, and values is the clear mandate to improve society. Richard Rorty (1999, 154), in *Philosophy and social hope*, is most direct on this point: “Our intellectual responsibilities are responsibilities to cooperate with others on common projects designed to promote the general welfare.”

For which reason, the realization of the purpose of education entails attending and responding to the variety of learning conditions of different individuals. In the face, then, of this diversity of learners, “a common school,” to use the terminology of E. D. Hirsch (1996, 238), is necessary. Hirsch outlines the main benefit of this institutional educational reform that pictures what an inclusive education requires, thus:

Bringing our children closer to universal competence is important. But an equally important contribution of the truly common school would be the strengthening of universal communicability and a sense of community within the public sphere. In the long run, that could be the common school's most important contribution to preserving the fragile fabric of our democracy.

Howard Gardner (2000, 187) summarizes his educational vision by highlighting the role of educators for change:

On the one hand, educators need to recognize the difficulties students face in attaining genuine understanding of important topics and concepts. On the other hand, educators need to take into account the differences among minds and, as far as possible, fashion an education that can reach the infinite variety of students.

INCLUSION AS SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Inclusion as freedom of being can open up possibilities of personal and social growth never tried before in exclusion. Briefly, exclusion is a social crime in that it deprives people of their right to freedom as members of a rational society. John Rawls's (1995, 60) forthright formulation of this position in *A theory of justice* is as follows: "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others." From the perspective of inclusion that sees everything completely significant in its own singularity in the process of reality, we gain new understanding of how the evolving consciousness affects at the core of our own humanity and society and of our shared responsibility to build a better world.

Martha Nussbaum (2007, 324), in her impressive latest work on social justice *Frontiers of justice*, takes on the challenge of building a better world from which every individual of future generations can benefit:

If our world is to be a decent world in the future, we must acknowledge right now that we are citizens of one interdependent world, held together by mutual fellowship as well as the pursuit of mutual advantage, by compassion as well as by self-interest, by a love of human dignity in all people, even when there is nothing we have to gain from cooperating with them. Or rather, even when what we have to gain is the biggest thing of all: participation in a just and morally decent world.

Surely, the institution of education can play an outstanding role in the realization of this goal. It is an education that commences with the cultivation of a new moral perspective that prioritizes social good over individual interests. George Soros's works permeate this position, perhaps to the disbelief of his many critics. For instance, in an earlier work that confronts the basic flaw of capitalism, which in these uncertain times proves to be prophetic, Soros (1998, 96-97) lucidly writes:

We need to be concerned with the society in which we live, and when it comes to collective decisions we ought to be guided by the interests of society as a whole rather than our narrow self-interest. The aggregation of narrow self-interests through the market mechanism brings unintended adverse consequences. Perhaps the most severe, at the present moment in history, is the instability of financial markets.

Inclusion is not totalization or homogenization in the sense of something tyrannical that reduces every human person one single unit, and thus robs him of his own individual integrity. On the contrary, inclusion is a process that affirms and renews the irreducibility and inviolability of each human person. John Rawls's (1995, 587) concept of inclusion deserves an ample quote that will be a source of reflection and action for future inclusion practices:

Without conflating all persons into one but recognizing them as distinct and separate, it enables us to be impartial, even between persons who are not contemporaneous but who belong to many generations. Thus to see our place in society from the perspective of this position is to it *sub specie aeternitatis*....The perspective of eternity...is a certain form of thought and feeling that rational persons can adopt within the world.

Equally provocative is Jürgen Habermas's (2005, xxxvi) recent elaboration of the meaning of inclusion as a social and political theory, as expressed in his *Inclusion of the other*: "Here inclusion does not imply locking members into a community that closes itself off from others. The 'inclusion of the other' means rather that the boundaries of the community are open for all, also and most especially for those who are strangers to one another and want to remain strangers." Hence, inclusion is sensitivity to and solidarity with differences. Undoubtedly, the concept of inclusion has implications in education envisioned as a necessary condition for social transformation.

PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In examining the broad context of inclusion as key to social transformation, Gary Thomas and Christine O'Hara (2001, vii) stress: "Inclusive education is really about extending the comprehensive ideal in education." This means enlarging our comprehension of what education is and its role in the life of society as a whole. Similarly, Charles Taylor (1994, 65-66) gives a concrete suggestion for improving the educational curricula, indicating further, thus: "Enlarging and changing the curriculum is therefore essential...in order to give due recognition to the hitherto excluded." This means providing a learning environment in every school that meets the diversity of learning needs and nuances of students coming from diverse cultural traditions.

Therefore, it is highly commendable that curriculum development must be sensitive to the political landscape of pluralism, where differences are constitutive of individual identities. An adequate educational system is precisely that which

truly recognizes the ontological dimension in everyone. That is, educational programs must be accommodating enough to include those who might be marginalized because of difference in race or creed or because of physical or mental impairments.

For our purposes, we specifically deal here with the issue of adequately addressing the challenge of the evolving learning potentials of the human person. This is so, since increasing teaching competence is at the heart of teacher education. Education requires constant rethinking of the peculiarities of the learner, and accordingly of teaching styles. Inclusive education is precisely this process of improving teaching perspectives and methodologies to wisely respond to diversity of learning.

More than ever, we need to expand our education vision and implement it with appropriate policies and programs to include the neglected and the marginalized members of society. The same utopia of inclusion precisely consists in learning to live in mutual understanding and lasting peace with one another. A free and rational society should not give up on the work of peace. Jacques Delors's (1996, 22) eloquence resonates with every well-meaning individual's ardent wish for a lasting peace based on inclusive education: "Utopia, some might think, but it is a necessary Utopia, indeed a vital one if we are to escape from a dangerous cycle sustained by cynicism or by resignation." To the goal of social transformation to which inclusive education is inextricably bound as an integral means, the following processes relate:

- Exploring the educational prerequisites of building an informed society that draws on the critical capacity of its citizens to frame and articulate relevant issues;
- Probing the depths of education in relation to its social goal of developing everyone's potentials to effect social development; and
- Democratizing the education systems as open spaces for mutual growth in freedom.

Inclusive education, notwithstanding its radical suggestions for educational reforms, is good for the economy in the long run. That is what the principle of inclusion or inclusiveness is all about. Rawls (1995, 413) writes of this, accordingly: "The principle of inclusiveness...runs as follows: one long-term plan is better than another for any given period (or number of periods) if it allows for the encouragement and satisfaction of all the aims and interests of the other plans and for the encouragement and satisfaction of some further aim or interest in addition." Applied to the institution of education, inclusion simply promotes and argues for everyone to get the right education as a condition for realizing the vision of an inclusive society. A truly informed, morally adept, and politically mature and holistically educated citizenry must lead to a progressive society. It cannot be anything less!

The issue of inclusion definitely poses philosophical questions to the way we understand and practice education today. Since the need for educational reforms is increasingly felt today more than ever, institutional preconditions for the implementation of inclusive education must be identified and put in place immediately. Inclusive education frames society's relational contexts for a positive response to the broad challenge of living in a pluralistic society where difference is

the norm. Both deeply political and profoundly philosophical, inclusive education calls for an enlightened citizenry to build a better society. And a better society is essentially envisioned as a place where everyone's potentials can truly flourish.

The well-being of the society results from the sustained commitment and selfless acts of the people making it. With candor, Soros (2004, 250) in another work relates that "self-interest is not enough; there has to be a commitment to making the system work that transcends self-interest." Thus, from the perspective of inclusion, education is primarily the means towards social transformation. This suggests improving the way we do education to cope with the dynamic movement of society, especially if we aspire for economic prosperity.

Thus, of prime importance here is the enlarging of education system as such to include the foundations of a genuine economic rise. Economics Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen (2000, 129), in his *Development as freedom*, is insightful: "A general expansion of education and literacy in a region can facilitate social change and also help to enhance economic progress from which others too benefit."

Education has a social goal; its constancy as source of learning applies to the development of society as a whole. Personal learning implies ultimately building the society. The key here is to make people aware that their learning capabilities need to be fully developed and brought to a level of social well-being. In *Good work*, Howard Gardner (2001, 243), together with his coauthors, cogently proffers, as follows: "The most developed individuals exhibit a sense of autonomy and maturity, while at the same time maintaining a connection to the wider community, to vital traditions of earlier times, and to people and the institutions yet to come."

Thus, as hitherto argued, it is wise to briefly acknowledge the major philosophies in the history of ideas that have characteristically influenced our traditions of education today. G. W. F. Hegel's exhortation of the wisdom to study philosophy applies relevantly today, no doubt. For instance, from Hegel's (1977, 41) masterpiece, *Phenomenology of spirit*, we read: "Let the other sciences try to argue as much as they like without philosophy—without it they can have in them neither life, Spirit, nor truth." Philosophy as self-reflection animates the development of ideas and transforms them into flesh in human history. That therefore necessitates rising to an adequate understanding of the history of philosophy which embodies the evolution of the human spirit.

Developing a philosophical perspective on education is a necessary process of arriving at a clear understanding of the relationship between philosophy and education as an integral component of social existence. The knowledge of the history of ideas, in which exposure to philosophy essentially consists, is inseparable from the history of education. Bernard Lonergan's (1988, 4-5) formulation of the inextricable relation of philosophy and education is most illustrative:

Philosophy is reflection on the human situation at an ultimate level. It is fundamental thinking about the human situation. And education is the great means for transforming the human situation. It changes people's minds and wills. Consequently, philosophy and education are interdependent.

For one, a philosophical grasp of what education must be urges that social transformation be articulated as a conscious goal of the whole learning imperative. That is, with philosophy education can be put at the right perspective to envisage the whole picture of human existence. "The habit of viewing life as a whole is an essential part of both wisdom and of true morality, and is one of the things which ought to be encouraged in education," perceptively analyzes Bertrand Russell (1996, 169). Indeed, philosophy as "love of wisdom" is concerned with the realization of a coherent vision of reality. Wisdom implies a life of relentless search for knowledge, insofar as the knowledge sought makes one's life worth living. Learning how to search for and attain wisdom is definitely educational in orientation.

Expressed in another way, the evolution of ideas is linked to the development of educational thinking. For which reason, how we profoundly understand and do education today can be traced to those living ideas that have determined the intellectual heritage of the world. This further brings us to the philosophical foundations of education as exemplified by the work of John Brubacher in his bestseller, *Modern philosophies of education* (1978), the tour de force collaboration *Philosophical foundations of education* by Howard Ozmon and Samuel Craver (1995), and Gerald Gutek's important contribution *Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education* (1997).

What follows is a cursory sketch of the history of educational thought:

PLATO AND THE TRADITION OF IDEALISM

- The contemplation of truth as the end of education
- Dialogue as the method of contemplation
- Character formation as integral in the contemplation of truth

Plato's (1989a) dialogue, *Republic*, is said to be the best treatise on education ever written. It provides the metaphysical foundation of political education as the achievement of a fulfilled life in a rational and free society. The metaphysical foundation of political education refers to the universal truths that need to be discovered and contemplated upon as conditions for real existence. The educational idealism of Plato argues for the performance of one's role in society on account of one's capabilities. Plato further suggests that learning to lead one's life in the function of one's place in society is *justice*. The question of justice is crucial in understanding Platonic education that inspires everyone to help in the realization of the perfection of society. To live justice presupposes contemplating on the essence of justice, and striving to put that into practice within the context of political existence. Plato's (1989b) other important work, *Laws*, specifically draws the institutional mechanisms to pursue and ensure the realization of the vision of the *Republic*. Clearly, in Plato, the goal of education extends beyond the world of individuals to include the common good.

ARISTOTLE AND THE TRADITION OF REALISM

- The development of human potentials as the goal of education
- Scientific investigation as an adequate approach to the world

- The belief in the presence of universal patterns in the universe that can be neatly organized

Aristotle's (1963) *Metaphysics* expresses a profound yet down-to-earth theory of the world, where he maintains that everything in the world is interconnected. The principle of causality explains that everything is said to have come from or caused by another reality. For, as its logic points out, if there were no causes, then there would be no effects. Moreover, the effects are as real as their causes. The strength of this statement comes from the position that everything that exists follows a universal pattern. Consequently, everything that exists aims at some end that essentially gives it its purpose. For instance, the clear presence of rationality in the human person behooves him to bring his mental capabilities to the full. Aristotle, as well as his followers, emphasizes the necessity of recognizing the reality of material existence as fundamentally constitutive of the spiritual sphere that idealists strongly hold. In other words, the world of matter really exists as the world of ideas do. Realism, then, pursue an integral or holistic understanding of reality that is both material and spiritual or ideal. The aim of education in a realist tradition is to develop the totality of the human person, enabling him to cope with the demands of the real world.

MARCUS AURELIUS AND THE TRADITION OF STOICISM

- The care/cure of the self is the primordial interest in education.
- Discipline in one's thoughts and actions is a necessary training in the healing of the soul.
- Self-mastery is ultimately linked to the governance of society.

Of interest in the whole Stoic practice is the suggestion that education is essentially a therapeutic practice of being; the self is in need of healing that finds its wholeness in the tranquility of the mind. Mental soundness is a prerequisite for resolute living that defines an attitude of indifference to suffering and to pain. Put simply, the Stoic position states that attitude is everything, as far as attending to the vicissitudes of life is concerned. Happiness, accordingly, is a state of the mind. What is important is to consciously strive to be in harmony with the universe.

In the end, harmony with the universal order is the real source of inner peace amidst chaos and strife. Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius is exemplary in the field of politics that is intricately woven with an ethics of the self. *Meditations* expresses Marcus Aurelius's (2003) profound yet practical insights into the meaning of political existence that seeks the integration of self-control and political exercise. That is, unless one learns to curb one's appetites for the lower desires and redirect one's thoughts to a higher purpose, one can never be an effective leader to rule over a vast empire. Certainly, the implications of these ancient reflections on political life ring true today. Leadership in today's global society is a test of moral endurance more than political and business acumen.

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU AND THE TRADITION OF ROMANTICISM

- Education means letting the individual develop his natural instinct of compassion, that is, fundamental sense of existence, unhampered by social conventions.
- Learning from the course of nature, in which every individual is embedded, is the appropriate way to educate.
- The educational environment must be naturally conducive to the development of the inclinations of the individual.

Romanticism celebrates the freedom that the splendor of human nature perfectly radiates in the minds and hearts of everyone. Nature takes precedence over the conventions of society that are of human making. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1779) *Émile* is a classic in the pedagogy of naturalistic child-rearing. The story of *Émile* narrates the ideal of education, when interpreted according to the model of innocence. Encouraging the child to grow on the basis of his natural development, by precisely guiding him towards self-knowledge, essentially maintains an optimistic conception of human nature. To learn from human nature is to feel one's existence, since nature speaks in the depths of everyone. Specifically, for Rousseau, the education of the child into becoming a perfect or complete individual requires training him in the fundamental sentiment of love. Learning to be human in Rousseau deeply involves allowing oneself to mature in love. With all the emotive implications of this Rousseauist assertion, there is the underlying cognitive aspect that brings us to the educational import of Romanticism. Education as the cultivation of innate desires implies the formation of the will. Furthermore, this attenuates the supposed rigor of institutional instruction to the process of interiorization that engages the individual in the process of looking inwardly into the good of his being.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD AND THE TRADITION OF EXISTENTIALISM

- Education as the creation of one's life into an authentic existence.
- Human experience is uniquely individual for everyone.
- Teaching implies leading students to a genuine sense of who they really are.

Existentialism can be traced to the living aphorisms of the 19th century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. However, its popularity in the early 20th century arose as a sustained protest movement following the irrationality of World Wars I and II. Humanity's collective deep sense of tragedy over meaningless loss of millions of lives in the aftermath of the world wars provoked a rethinking of reason itself and of its logical extension in objective science. According to the existentialist sentiment, the objectivity in which science prides itself has caused little to prevent the horror that a world war can bring in the face of the earth. Worse, it has even become an accomplice to its evil schemes. In the light of this recollection of the havoc on humanity, an existentialist education proposes instead a return to the

meaning of life, including an intense sense of one's emotions, feelings, and fears. Unlike the dry themes empirical science wryly investigates, an existentialist education strongly focuses on the question of death and of all the anxiety, anguish, and absurdity it causes in the human person as important educational topics.

Following Søren Kierkegaard's view, for example, in his *Concluding unscientific postscript* (2000), no science can teach anyone how to live his life. Human life is a subjective passion that each one is solely responsible for. Hence, the purpose of education, if it is to make an impact in the individual, is to mold the human capacity for a constant avowal of faith, that is, for a decisively free existence. Education must help individuals learn to confront life's challenges with a "leap of faith," that is, with resolute belief in oneself. Faith expresses the human person's fundamental passion for existence. For in the end, one stands before the ultimate reality with nothing to boast of except one's affirmative stance towards life.

JOHN DEWEY AND THE TRADITION OF PRAGMATISM

- Education is the search for practical solutions to real-life problems.
- Experimentation is the measure of determining the validity of a theory.
- Environment plays a crucial role in the development of consciousness.

The achievement of John Dewey lies in his dissolution of the truncated distinction between experience and nature in the entire educational enterprise. For Dewey, our epistemological access to nature passes through our interpretation of our concrete life-experiences. The quality of our experience is a window to the depths of nature. Education in its authentic sense is an expression of our search for a meaningful understanding of our experiences. Consequently, theories in education are far from being turned into conceptual gymnastics for those who have the luxury of musing.

Experience and nature are mutually inclusive in that the recognition of one necessarily implies the other. What is experiential is inextricably natural, because what we are, that is, our identity, forms its basis in the evolving process of nature. That is what Dewey (1958) explicitly propounds in his work, at least, in his book *Experience and nature*. Without constant reference to the objects of our experience, nature remains abstract. Dewey suggests that the test of genuine scientific theories is to bring them back to our normal experience, and find out whether they help us better understand our experiences. Education then for him means the process of socializing our experiences with the pattern of nature, in reference to which we frame the meaning of our life-experiences. That makes education ever relevant, since it must touch on the objects of our concrete experiences.

KARL MARX AND THE TRADITION OF SOCIALISM

- Education is the process of radical emancipation of society from forms of bondage.
- The method of education consists of a mutual exchange between the teacher and the student.
- Critical consciousness is developed as to lead to critical action.

That the point of doing philosophy is to change the world, as Karl Marx (1959) significantly inspires in his "Theses on Feuerbach," remains today as a powerful educational reminder. That is, the whole point of education is essentially to transform the world into something that is worthy of our aspirations as rational and free human persons. It cannot be anything less than this! Translating theories, understood basically as conceptual tools, into actions for the benefit of the society is one basic suggestion of this Marxian thesis that certainly puts into question the ways we do and promote education today.

The weight of the challenge to realize philosophical interpretations into social transformation becomes even more felt, especially if we isolate ideas from the rest of concrete situations. Ideas, theories, and concepts live in the world of men and women. The point is, as Marx has convincingly argued, to see these brilliant views develop to affect the world we live in today.

Marxism as an educational point of view, therefore, challenges inert educational ideas that complicate more than clarify basic issues that confront society. Education must lead to social change, in terms of an action, collective or otherwise, that creates a significant change in the structures of society. Education is *praxis*, to use the language of Marxism. By education as *praxis* we mean teaching for freedom. That is, education has the goal of opening the minds of individuals from the bondage of ignorance that is structurally embedded and systemically legitimated in them.

In brief, when viewed from the perspective of education, inclusion therefore shifts the dominant paradigm of education from teaching-centeredness to learning-centeredness, from the authority of the teacher to the creativity of the learner. Genuine teaching inquires into the learning gifts of students, and assists them to reach their full potentials. "The educator with a democratic vision or posture cannot avoid in his teaching *praxis* insisting on the critical capacity, curiosity, and autonomy of the learner," emphasizes widely regarded Brazilian philosopher of education Paulo Freire (2001, 33).

The ability to think clearly and imaginatively and to teach it to others is both a pedagogical skill and a social responsibility. Teaching definitely suggests helping students how to think in ways beyond their usual, let alone mechanical, ways of understanding. Thinking is a mode of relating to the world and of becoming responsible for one's relations. The latter reveals the creative dimension of thinking in that thinking shapes the world we live in. This implies opening up new possibilities of thinking, on the basis of one's freedom of thought.

Thinking differently is an exquisite expression of our rationality and a requisite dimension to our freedom of being. Emmanuel Levinas's (1969, 53 and 171) ethics of pedagogy here is most insightful: "The relation with the other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation, an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching.... Teaching is not a species of a genus called domination, a hegemony at work within a totality, but is the presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of totality." For that is what teaching is all about: changing the construction of the mind.

Inclusive education prepares individuals for a life of success by way of ensuring an increased participation of everyone in the improvement of society. Clearly then:

- Inclusive education is the means towards an inclusive society.
- Inclusive education is the process of changing the way we do education today to include rather than exclude those members of society who are most vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion.
- Inclusive education consists in a fundamental paradigm-shift in educational consciousness that reaffirms the centrality of learner/student in the entire pedagogical enterprise.
- Inclusive education is essentially teacher formation characterized by explicitly improved teaching strategies.

Therefore, the education of the human person goes beyond his achievement of a diploma to land in a job in some multinational company. This requires transforming the education system into something that really helps people succeed in life. Helping individuals to learn to succeed in life by respecting and promoting their unique capabilities and conditions to their best advantage makes a real education. And this basically sets our sights on the need to constantly increase the capacity of our teachers to successfully deal with the different learning contexts. Briefly, different learning needs require different teaching strategies which are intertwined in the process of becoming human. We cannot stress this further, considering that, to quote Immanuel Kant (2003, 6 and 11): “Man can only become man by education. He is merely what education makes of him....Hence, the greatest and most difficult problem to which man can devote himself is the problem of education.”

In other words, seen from its historical philosophical foundations, education involves the achievement of what is distinctively rational in the human person within the context of social development.

Hence, viewed from a wider educational standpoint, inclusion argues that “what is required is education for change, not for static job competencies,” to quote E. D. Hirsch (1988, 126) from his important work *Cultural literacy*. We have to make education work through concrete institutional programs. That is why when people are competent to perform jobs and enjoy the fruits of their labor, resulting from the creation of a more just society, we can expect a budding progressive society. It is for this reason that inclusive education has brighter prospects, as soon as people carry in them the good it bears to society.

The reasons then for the demand to encourage inclusive education as a new education perspective are as follows:

- the pressing need to change the existing practice of education that perpetuates the injustice of marginalization;
- the search for a just society that presupposes a radical theory and practice of education;
- a genuine human development that implies a global transformation; and
- everyone’s right to education which is the State’s duty to promote and protect.

The sooner we realize the necessity of inclusive education, and institutionalize its necessary mechanisms, say, in higher education, like universities, the better for us to start rebuilding our society. As Rudolf Steiner (1997, 218) exquisitely says:

We cannot simply attempt small changes in various institutions. What we need is a genuine rethinking, a transformation in our feeling, and a fresh learning. Only in that way can we understand our time and really progress!

THE UNIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

“The university has to stand for something,” imploringly writes Allan Bloom (1987, 337) in his controversial and equally influential book, *The closing of the American mind*. The university as an institution of higher learning must assert the vision of an inclusive society. The university justifies its existence in society by contributing to its well-being. The university—envisaged as an important critical space for freedom of inquiry in society—must struggle for the realization of its idea of social existence by implementing relevant and concrete academic programs and policies.

Hence, consistent with the foregoing argument, we posit that the essence of university education is inclusion. The university’s inclusive character lies, on the one hand, in the unity of teaching and research as its integral constitution, and, on the other hand, its connection with the society at large. Alfred North Whitehead (1967, 93) quips: “The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life....A university which fails in this respect has no reason for existence.” The British political theorist Michael Oakeshott, in his *The voice of liberal learning*, eloquently follows Whitehead’s challenge with this poignant political relevance. Oakeshott (2001, 117) clarifies:

A university will have ceased to exist when its learning has degenerated into what is now called research, when its teaching has become mere instruction and occupies the whole of an undergraduate’s time, and when those who came to be taught come not in search of their intellectual fortune but with a vitality so aroused or so exhausted that they wish only to be provided with serviceable moral and intellectual outfit; when they come with no understanding of the manners of conversation but desire only a qualification for earning a living or a certificate to let them in on the exploitation of the world.

For in its conservative sense, the university exists in society to preserve the richness of cultural traditions and social institutions which are embodiments of people’s collective aspirations and actions. The university, therefore, is tasked “to communicate a form of life, a *paideia*, in the sense of growing up in a morally and intellectually intelligible world,” as Robert Bellah (1985, 282) cogently argues in the bestseller *Habits of the heart*. This seems to suggest that teaching means the cultural transmission of knowledge for practical benefits, while research implies

the generation of new knowledge. Of vital importance here is the question that this unity raises. For it presents itself as intertwined modes of the transformation of truth that is underlying all scientific and scholarly works. The university is to be the place of such transformation.

In consequence, to create and promote evolving learning spaces is the formidable task of the university; it is its social responsibility. Curiously, world-renowned management guru Peter Drucker (1993, 102) wisely observes how the university as an organization has a social monopoly: "The university has a social monopoly—a power no other institution ever held before." Drucker clarifies his position on the vital role of the university in a later work. He raises his optimism in the potential of a university in the new society. In which case, the challenge is to translate this monopoly into something positive for the well-being of society. Whitehead (1967, 98) recognizes this: "A progressive society depends upon its inclusion of three groups—scholars, discoverers, inventors. Its progress also depends upon the fact that its educated masses are composed of members each with a tinge of scholarship, a tinge of discovery, and a tinge of invention." The university as a community of scholars is more importantly a community of friends who take leisure together in discovery and the pursuit of knowledge.

Given the infinite possibilities of learning that range across various disciplines, the university strives to be a place of total learning. In the same ground-breaking *UNESCO commission on education for the twenty-first century report*, Jacques Delors maintains that university education must be one of diversification. Meaning, it must recognize its decisive role in nation-building by providing students a broad range of training opportunities and the necessary environment to develop both general and specialized knowledge. Such academic and non-academic diversification in universities in concrete terms further identifies universities in relation to society. Delors (1996, 27-28) stresses this by maintaining universities

- as scientific establishments and centres of learning, from where students go on to theoretical or applied research or teaching;
- as establishments offering occupational qualifications, combining high-level knowledge and skills, with courses and content continually tailored to the needs of the economy;
- as some of the main meeting-places for learning throughout life, opening their doors to adults who wish either to resume their studies or to adapt and develop their knowledge or to satisfy their taste for learning in all areas of cultural life; and,
- as leading partners in international co-operation, facilitating exchanges of teachers and students and ensuring that the best teaching is made available through international professorships.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the philosophical foundation and the political orientation of inclusive education. Inclusive education is a laudatory strategy in the quest for social justice, insofar as the building of an inclusive society is fundamental

to the attainment of social justice. The vision of inclusion in education is unifying in that it serves to guide education reforms, policies, and initiatives aimed at the establishment of an inclusive society. This implies improving the quality of how we do education today in its institutional level to respond to new trends and processes of social existence. This is integral in the goal of social justice.

As a social process, education incorporates a wide array of sources that together form the foundation of society, including the free relationships that genuinely distinguish human existence. Free relationships are distinctly human in their capacity of rationality, of possessing motives to forge and sustain relationships with one another. If these free relationships were brought to their perfection, in terms of providing everyone a chance to succeed in life, then society reaches its full state of development.

Inclusive education is in a sense total education. In the language of today's management thrust, inclusive education is "*total quality education*." Meaning, the whole attempt to teach people how to coexist in a free and rational society demands the creativity to venture into new horizons of doing education that has a broad base of values for promoting harmony. Inclusive education affirms the social goal of peace among individuals and cultures. For where else and how else can this basic end of social existence be judiciously addressed and properly promoted than in and through the enlightening and liberating force of education? On the ground of actualized potentials, a truly informed citizenry must work together to achieve the common good. Working for the common good presupposes quite radically developing one's potentials to the full and implies contributing to the well-being of society.

Hence, more than a political rhetoric, inclusion is a political ethic that forms society's well-being demanding a collective commitment from its members. Translating this commitment to concrete programs of actions requires the participation and cooperation of every sector and institution of society, no doubt. The society to which everyone belongs is everyone's responsibility. Thus, the response that inclusive education exemplifies is also everyone's duty. For inclusive education involves every stakeholder, e.g., policy-makers, managers, researchers, teachers, and students, in the entire educational process in the task of building a better society through the promotion of inclusive practices in schools.

The education system, together with the local communities, has to direct its theories and actions towards the recognition and protection of those members of society who are most vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion. The revolution that inclusive education cognitively poses to society lies in our willingness to change the way we think about our society in general and about the neglected or marginal members of society and the manner we educate persons with disabilities, as a precondition of real social transformation.

Thus, until our vision of education as a vital source of social transformation is inclusive to recognize and provide enabling spaces for the marginal members of society, in particular the persons with disabilities who are most vulnerable to exclusion, our vision of society's sustained economic progress will forever be an elusive dream. That is why, for education to be real it must be inclusive!

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LEAVING POLITICS BEHIND: ARENDTIAN AND HEGELIAN READING OF HOBBS

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The Hobbesian social contract is effectively a repudiation of politics. And the story of humanity it tells is that of alienation. The multitude left politics behind in the state of nature, demarcating it as the power and domain of the Sovereign, as they surrendered their political capacities—their wills and judgments—to constitute the commonwealth. What they got in return is the guarantee to safely pursue the necessities of life. Thus, the politics of the modern state, as applied to subjects, has always been the administration and care of mere life. This interpretation depends on a Hegelian and Arendtian reading of Hobbes.

The only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of Foraigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby secure them in such sort, as that by their owne industrie, and by the fruites of the Earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is to conferre all their power and strength on one Man... and therein submit their Wills, every one to his Will, and their Judgements, to his Judgement.

—Thomas Hobbes (2000, 120)

INTRODUCTION

The movement of individuals from the state of nature and the constitution of the commonwealth through their covenant, described in Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, is a reversed Hegelian history. The covenant is a repudiation of politics, which is left behind in the state of nature by the multitude in their transformation into subjects, demarcating and defining politics exclusively as the domain of the Sovereign. This is in exchange for the protection that the commonwealth provides to mere life or biological life; that is, life limited to its sustenance through labor and the enjoyment of labor's products.

This contention depends on readings of G. W. F. Hegel and Hannah Arendt, which are then used to interpret Hobbes. The relevant assertions of Hegel (1980)

are derived from his account of the master-slave dialectic as a process of humankind's historical self-becoming. Here, Hegel provides a narrative for the realization of self-consciousness and the resolution of humanity's estrangement from its true being. The movement of humankind in Hegel is towards wholeness. The movement of humankind in Hobbes, on the other hand, is towards estrangement. Meanwhile in Arendt (1998), the human activities of labor, work, and action distinguish political life from mere life. What Arendt identifies as the rise of the social (the privileging of what was before hidden—the economic activities of production and consumption that she associates with necessity) is precisely the life lived by subjects under the protection of the Sovereign. The rise of the social and the delimiting of the political as the domain of the state muddle the traditional distinction between the public and private realms. Thus, Arendt observes, what were previously private become objects of politics and assume the appearance of being properly public.

But before proceeding further, there are several concepts in what I claim that need clarification. First, how should we understand Hobbes's state of nature? We can, for example, interpret it as a philosophical construct, an ideal type, that helps illuminate a normative claim. Thus, the state of nature is an *other* from which, through differentiation, Hobbes explains the concept of the commonwealth. The commonwealth is what the state of nature is not. Here, the state of nature also becomes justification for the commonwealth and rationalization for the Sovereign's absolute control of the political. We can also interpret Hobbes's state of nature as the actual state of affairs that is prior to civil society, or a reality that is sometimes found within and outside of society. In both instances, the state of nature threatens the commonwealth: as perennial possibilities of societal regression and dissolution (through internal or external wars). Hobbes points to the primitive peoples of Europe, the indigenous dwellers of North America, and the conflict-prone interstate relations as examples of the state of nature (Tuck 2000, xxix-xxx). Also Giorgio Agamben (1998, 105-106) sees the state of nature as effectively existing in society in the guise of the state of exception. The state of nature is both external and internal to the commonwealth and becomes manifest, for example, in the threshold of law and non-law. To Agamben, the state of exception is the paradigm of state power.

The implication of these different ways of understanding the state of nature is varied. For the purposes of this essay, the interpretation of Hobbes's state of nature as theoretical construct is more appropriate and useful. But as a consequence, this essay becomes limited on several levels. I will not argue here that Hobbes's state of nature is pre-society or is effectively present in contemporary society.¹ These are, by choice and by necessity (as consequence of my assumption), beyond the scope of this essay. I do not thereby claim actual history when I assert that Hobbes's account of the movement of individuals from the state of nature to the commonwealth in the *Leviathan* is reversed Hegelian history. What I mean coincides more with the movement of history as problematized philosophically (e.g., in Hegel and Marx). Instead, I claim that state of nature explains and justifies Hobbes's prescription of an absolute state. From this, I also claim that it is an ideological rationalization for any other state that confronts its citizens in a manner of nakedness (separate and without protection) and without mediation. This might be Alexis de Tocqueville's

(2000) image of democratic America as mild despotism, the perverse politics of mass society in Arendt, or Agamben's state of exception.

Second, how should we understand the politics that is left behind in the movement of the multitude from the state of nature towards the commonwealth? Here, Arendt is again relevant. The practice of modern representative democracy has diluted politics' potential as space and process for the realization and display of human autonomy. According to Arendt (1998, 7-8, 22-28), politics is the realm of action and speech. It is the practice of freedom. As such, it requires the agonistic differentiation and showing of oneself in interactively constituted public spaces. It is dependent on the continuous presence of others; it is in fact always being with others. It is the exclusive prerogative of humans, differentiating him/her from beast or god. Politics, as constituted by and founded on human action and speech, is inevitably plural. Plurality is a human condition of action in the sense that "nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live." The motivation, manner, and content of politics are as plural as the multitude of individuals capable of having, undertaking, and making them. Politics, then, is the agonistic realm and process of the plurality of action and speech.

This understanding of politics can be extended by Hegel's conception of the *fight* that divides the world into masters and slaves. The human experience of nature engenders the consciousness of things. However, this consciousness is incomplete. The higher state of self-consciousness comes from the recognition, given and received, in one's contentious interaction with other humans. The risking of life, the subjugation of similar others—these are acts that serve as mirrors, constituting the condition for the awareness of self. The quest for recognition and the process of self-consciousness is a confrontation, a fight (Kojève 1980, 39-41).

The sense of politics in both Arendt and Hegel is agonistic. Politics is to appear, to recognize and be recognized: to be particularized, to be differentiated, to be distinctive. The equivalent of this in Hobbes, according to Arendt (1998, 56-57), is "Vaine-glory," the "Joy, arising from imagination of man's own power and ability... that exultation of the mind which is called GLORYING...grounded upon the experience of...former actions [and]...the flattery of others...for the delight in the consequence of it..." (Hobbes 2000, 42). But to Hobbes, "vaine-glory" is vice.

Third, what do we mean by mere life? I use the phrase *mere life* in this essay in the sense of Aristotle and Arendt. Aristotle (1958, 5) distinguishes mere life—"that stage, still short of full self-sufficiency"—from the good life—"therefore fully self-sufficient." Mere life is associated with the satisfaction of daily needs, the reproduction of the physical self. Aristotle sees the Greek polis as arising or growing from it (that is, it is necessary for the material reproduction of the city) but not existing because of it. Aristotle (1958, 111) sees that there must be some kind of good in the simple act of living, for people are willing to endure great amounts of suffering to cling to life. Thus, mere life must have in it "a sort of healthy happiness and a natural quality of pleasure." Mere life, however, is not the good life, the political life—the life of which the city is for. In Arendt (1998, 4-5, 96-97), mere life is the human condition defined by labor. It is human needs and wants in accordance to the natural cycle of nature. It is temporary and never permanent or long lasting. It is the mere sustaining of life and, as such, is driven by necessity. It is

only the starting point of life to Arendt, something to be built on in the quest of human becoming. Mere life and its instrument, labor, are threats to both work and action, in the sense that their privileging in contemporary mass society has reduced work to working for life (to making a living) and almost banished action from the public realm. Mere life is a threat when it is privileged as the only tolerable version of life.²

These clarifications determine the horizon on which my claim, that politics is left behind in the state of nature in Hobbes (2000, 117, 224), is theoretically tested and explored. It is useful to note here that what the covenant in the *Leviathan* accomplishes is the provision of security through the "Sword," "the terrour of some Power." This Power, the Sovereign, is the outcome of the covenant and as such is not subject to it. The Sovereign administers the commonwealth by virtue of powers or capacities that are sourced from the state of nature. It is thus inside and outside of the commonwealth at the same time.

ARENDR: RISE OF THE SOCIAL

Arendt (1998, 14-15) adopts the Aristotelian categories of mere life and the agonistic political life of the citizen. She also recognizes that the life of the mind is a life-option in the city-state and favored, for example, by the philosophy of Plato. This privileging of the *bios teoretikos*, also the *vita contemplativa* in Arendt, indicates a hierarchy in the life-options available to the citizens in the ancient Greek polis. Thus, mere life materially supports political life (*bios politikos*, also the exemplar *vita activa*), which are then surpassed by theoretical life—the ceasing of all activities to pursue the freedom of contemplation. Arendt (1998, 17, 85) claims that this traditional Greek hierarchy favoring the life-option of theoretical life elides the "distinctions and articulations within the *vita activa itself*." The ancient Greeks, for example, did not differentiate between laboring and working. This omission of the nuances within the active life is retained even in the famous philosophical inversions of the traditional hierarchy, as exemplified by Marx and Nietzsche. In their theories, the conceptual framework of the hierarchy is preserved. "[These] modern reversals," according to Arendt (1998, 17), "share with the traditional hierarchy the same assumption that the same central human preoccupation must prevail in all activities of men, since without one comprehensive principle no order could be established." For example, matter and the human activity directly interacting with it, labor, are favored over the contemplative life in Marx's inversion of Hegel.³ But there is more to Hegel's theory than the laboring of slaves that leads to self-consciousness. The master-slave dialectic is precisely founded on the conceptions of *fight* and *work*, both active lives that make way for the life of the mind. Marx's inversion, then, ignores the other fundamental possibilities of active life and limits it only to laboring. Arendt sees in Marx's inversion of Hegel the historical cause and the ideological account of the rise of the social.

The differentiation of human activities in *The human condition* into labor, work, and action sets up Arendt's critique of the dominance of the social in modern society. The rise of the social consists in the enlargement of the realm of what used to be properly private activities of laboring and working⁴ and their transformation

into the exemplars of what is now regarded as eminently political and, as such, public concern. The rise of the social is the breaching of the divide between private and public and the resulting designation of what were previously private as the proper objects of politics.

Laboring is the sustenance of mere life. It is, says Arendt (1998, 83-84, 96-98) the activity made necessary by the imperatives of human existence as biological entity, as partaking in the cycles of nature. Laboring is a capitulation and enslavement to necessity. Thus, the institution of slavery by the ancient Greeks is an attempt to avoid this surrender—to exclude laboring from the condition of citizen life through the actual enslavement of others who are condemned to a life of labor. The human laborer is considered as *animal laborans*, the highest of animals but animal just the same (determined by necessity). The products of labor are characterized by impermanence, lack of durability, transience—"[t]heir consumption barely survives the act of their production." This makes labor an unceasing activity. Arendt locates laboring in the hidden life of the household or *oikos* of the ancient Greek city-states. It is the activity of the slaves and women, and is beyond the concerns of the citizen. Arendt does not necessarily agree with the mostly negative perception of labor by the ancient Greeks. The material reproduction of life after all is necessary to the other kinds of active life and is always part of the human condition. But she (1998, 45-49) agrees with the Greek categorization of labor as an activity properly pursued within the private realm. In modern theory and practice, the privileging of labor and work breached the walls of privacy around laboring and working. The rise of the social is the emergence of necessary labor from the private and hidden into the public realm. This event has the destructive effect of relegating other human activities, specifically political action, into the bottom of a hierarchy and overwhelming it into insignificance.

Working, in contradistinction to laboring, introduces continuity to human material history because its products are more permanent, more resilient. Work is "the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence," it "provides an artificial world of things... [w]ithin its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all" (Arendt 1998, 7). Work creates the human world that is distinct from nature. Work refers to activities in which human beings control and use nature to create a durable and distinctively human world. Among other things, it is the building of structures, crafting, writing, painting, and creating music. It originates from the human desire of permanence, of distinction from what is natural, of fabricating a world of spaces and structures for the unfolding and the purposes of human life. The world, says Arendt (1998, 5, 136-139, 144, 230, 306-307) as the product of work is a place of intersubjectivity. It also mediates human relations with nature and protects humans from nature. Thus, the working individual, the *homo faber*, is "indeed a lord and master, not only because he is the master or has set himself up as the master of all nature but because he is master of himself and his doings." The rise of the social, however threatens the *homo faber* as laboring becomes indistinguishable from working—when the making of art, architecture, etc., is seen as working for a living; as his/her creations become commodified and determined by the vagaries of consumption; and as necessity becomes work's primary rational.

This privileging of laboring and jobholding in modern society menace, as well, action, the political life and, consequently, freedom. The effect of a philosophy that favors the theoretical life is the conflation of the various activities of the active life when contrasted to contemplative life. The inversion of this simple and reductive hierarchy preserves the conflation. Thus the distinctive human activity in the realm of the public, of politics, is lost in the breaching of the private. Arendt (1998, 30-31, 175-77) favors action, the proper activity within the political realm because it is eminently interactive and interpersonal. Action places an individual among other humans. Action is how human beings transcend nature, interact with others, create the new, and distinguish themselves. Action is the unique expression of the capacities for freedom and transcendence, and is distinctively human achievement. It is an end in itself and is not subordinate to anything outside itself. As such it is synonymous to freedom, a manifestation of freedom: action is freedom practiced. Practically, action is the disclosure of the agent through speech and deed; it is the distinction or differentiation of the agent from all others within the plurality of the public realm. Action implies (as already asserted in this essay's introductory discussions) plurality: "While all aspects of the human condition are somehow related to politics, this plurality is specifically the condition—not only the *conditio sine qua non*, but the *conditio per quam*—of all political life" (Arendt 1998, 7). Action, as it is the activity of a multitude of humans, is plural. It is always deployed in contradistinction with other actions. This is the basis of the earlier claim that politics is agonistic. This plurality engenders what Arendt (1998, 220-22) calls the calamities of action—the unpredictability of its outcome, the irreversibility of its processes, "the haphazardness and moral irresponsibility in a plurality of agents." The calamities of action are what the social seeks to contain and sublimate in its privileging of labor and mere life, in the overpowering of political activity through the conflation of the private with the public. The rise of the social, then, not only favors laboring over other activities such as work and action, it also seeks to transform them or banish them altogether.⁵ Contemporary society, as the result of the rise of the social, has effectively deprecated the political, properly speaking, or transformed it into a realm overwhelmed by the concerns of mere life.

HEGEL: SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND HUMAN BECOMING

The goal of humankind in Hegel's *Phenomenology of the spirit* (1977) is the realization of absolute knowledge—the revelation of the totality of Being "at the end of History, in the last World created by Man" (Kojève 1980, 32). This culmination, this end of history is actualized in the duality of Hegel writing *Phenomenology* and Napoleon fighting in the Battle of Jena. Napoleon in this instance represents the realized ideals of the French Revolution—the whole of anterior historical evolution, the whole of human history. To understand Napoleon then, something that Hegel claims to have achieved in *Phenomenology*, is to understand universal history and to stand at its end (Kojève 1980, 34-35). Hegel possesses in this last World absolute knowledge, which is self-knowledge—the realization that the object of knowledge and the subject of knowledge are one and the same. But what is absolute knowledge and how is its attainment possible? To ask this question,

according to Alexandre Kojève (1980, 32-33) is to go through an understanding of universal history. And to understand history, we must understand the materials that constitute it, its builders and designers, its final cause—for whom history is constructed, to be perceived, understood, described, and criticized. To know history is to know the *Man* who realizes it. The problem of humankind in Hegel is the problem of realizing self-consciousness. In fact, the human at the end of history is the self-conscious human—aware of him/herself as “no longer a particular and momentary *aspect* of Being (which he/she mistakes for the totality of Being), but Being in its integral whole, as it is in and for itself.” This self-conscious human is also the culmination of history. His/her history then is the history of self-consciousness.

Hegel’s (1980, 9) bifurcation of humankind into the master and slave (lord and bondsman), based on the differentiation of their primary activities of “fighting” and “working,” suggests the fundamental reason for humankind’s estrangement from the world and from itself. It also suggests how self-consciousness will take its form in the end of history. Although the master-slave dialectic occurs only at the earliest stage of self-consciousness, it still illustrates the main problematic in Being’s realization—that is, the engendering of self-recognition through the recognition of and by others. The dialectic also sets up the the form of the final realization of self-consciousness in the dialectical overcoming of both master and slave.

Mere consciousness is sense-certainty—a way of gaining knowledge of the world through its direct or intuitive perception involving understanding rather than comprehension (Hegel 1977, 58). Sense-certainty misses comprehension in its insistence of a fundamental distinction between subject and object. This, in turn, leads to the dichotomy, which separates a world that is given to understanding and a world in itself and, as such, escapes understanding.⁶ The limit of sense-certainty is revealed in the realization that whatever can be known of the world is determined by the constraints of human understanding. Thus, sense-certainty does not lead to self-consciousness, as it is a disclosure that does not take Being into itself. Being remains independent of consciousness (Hegel 1977, 102; Kojève 1980, 37). Self-consciousness must thus proceed from an entirely different source other than mere contemplation of the world.

Hegel (1977, 108-10, 113-15) attributes the primal appearance of self-consciousness to desire. The experience of desire reveals the ‘I’ of contemplation and the “non-I” of the thing desired. It is not only limited to the mere wanting to satisfy, as in the case of hunger, but also to the wanting to transform, to negate, and to possess. Desire that engenders self-consciousness is thus directed not to mere things but also to other desires. Desire directed to mere things is a biological desire satisfied by a biological action that flows from it—the “I” revealed by this desire is immediately lost through its satisfaction. The “I” constituted by the desire for other desires, meanwhile, is never satisfied and, as such, requires constant attention, a constant recognition. The “I” in this instance does not disappear and is most enduring. This “I” also requires the risking of life as the desire for other desires requires recognition, which in the case of the other recognizing “I” means his/her subjugation.

A primeval form of self-consciousness in history, in the form of desire directed towards things, is *work* or the instrumental consciousness of the slave in relation to

nature. Its transience is mitigated as consequence of the slave's continuous subservience to the master. Meanwhile, the master's contentious but also primitive self-consciousness, manifested in the form of *fight* with other masters, is borne out of desire directed towards other desires. But this self-consciousness still falls short of the ideal, as it is incomplete. This is because fight does not result to an equal other that can initiate a mirroring process⁷ for the master to recognize himself but instead to an inferior other. Fight does not necessarily end in killing (although this is always a possible outcome) but in non-synthesizing overcoming of others; that is, life and consciousness are preserved and only autonomy is destroyed (Hegel 1980, 14-15). Fight makes masters and slaves. Thus the recognition derived from fight is never satisfactory to the master as it is a recognition from an inferior. The slave recognizes the master who in turn does not recognize the slave (Hegel 1977, 116; 1980, 19-20).

However, it will be the slave who will finally "withdraw into itself and be transformed into a truly independent consciousness" (Hegel 1977, 117). The truth of the master is the slave: "The human ideal, born in the Master, can be realized and *revealed*, can become [truth] only in and by Slavery" (Kojève 1980, 47). The slave's work provides him/her with the knowledge and techniques to master humankind's natural condition. This enables a mirroring process wherein self-consciousness is realized through his/her creations. When the slave contemplates the human world, s/he sees him/herself. Also, the slave's precarious life under the master engenders a constant and anxious "I." The resolution of this anxiety and fear is the final factor in the slave's realization of self-consciousness—a fight for recognition. The slave, thus, in the eventuality of his fight for liberation from the master, will become the synthesis that will make whole real self-consciousness (Hegel 1977, 118-119).

Alexandre Kojève (1980, 52) privileges the slave,⁸ crediting mostly to his/her work the fact of historical human becoming. However, it is important to modify this with the recognition of the necessary role of the master in the final confrontation for self-consciousness. The critical factor is when the slave learns how to fight and thus completes his/her self-consciousness. Hegel (1977, 53-57), however, ultimately elides the final bloody fight between masters and slaves because history produced instead the safe synthesis of pseudo masters/slaves and their slavish ideologies of Stoicism, Solipsism, and Christianity. The slave did not overcome the master. Thus both became, what Hegel calls, "unhappy consciousnesses" in the modern world.

But the important assertion in Hegel is contained in the history of self-consciousness that synthesizes the human activities of *working* and *fighting*. The movement of history is the integration of these two sources of self-consciousness in the final Being. In conjunction with Arendt, Hegel's interpretation of the political in history is characterized by contentiousness or agonism. In Hobbes, this history is reversed. The final human of the covenant that constitutes the Leviathan and the commonwealth is an individual divested of the capacities for action—an estranged being. The individual of the commonwealth has abandoned *fighting*. In Arendt, fighting—equivalent to calamitous action—is properly political. In *On revolution* (1965), for example, she praises revolutionary political action as the creation of the new—a nascence. In Hobbes, this political is arrogated by the Sovereign and designated solely as its domain and power.

HOBBS: LEAVING POLITICS BEHIND IN THE STATE OF NATURE

Will and Judgment—the two primary human capacities that are, to Hobbes (2000, 44, 47, 120), sources of human strength and power. These capacities are surrendered by the multitude of individuals from the state of nature in their transformation into subjects within the commonwealth. We can ask the significance of these capacities and therein understand the fundamental sacrifice for the constitution of the Leviathan. The will is the “last Appetite, or Aversion, immediately adhaering to action, or to the omission thereof...the Act of Willing in Deliberation” —the sum of “all Desires, Aversions, Hopes and Fears.” Judgment, meanwhile, is “the last Opinion in search of the truth of Past, and Future...or *Resolute* and *Finalle Sentence* of him that discourseth”—the end or resolution of discourse, as the title of *Leviathan's* Chapter 7 puts it. Willing is the condition for action, judgment is the condition for independent thought. We can imagine then the magnitude of the multitude's sacrifice and surrender to the Sovereign. The sacrifice/surrender of will and judgment is effectively a repudiation of one's capacity and freedom to act and think for oneself.

But Hobbes sees only catastrophic consequences arising from the capacity and freedom of an individual in the state of nature to will and judge for him/herself. The trouble with will and judgment is that they are a multitude, as many and as varied as the individuals who possess and actualize them. This teemingness is further complicated by the passions and other human capacities that motivate or parallel them: The will, on one hand, is the enactment of human passions. Passions are appetites—the voluntary movement towards human desires in the hope of possession or satisfaction—and aversion—the movement away from sources of revulsion or things of indifference. Appetite and aversion underlie love and hate and determine good and evil. What we love and what we consider good are what we desire. What we hate and what we consider evil are what we find repugnant. The language of appetite and aversion, according to Hobbes, is always an imperative — always a case of “Do this, forbear that.” Thus, the encounters between appetites and aversions are always potentially disastrous. Consequently, wills are always in conflict with other wills. Judgment, on the other hand, is derived from sense perception, memory and imagination that, to Hobbes, are always fallible. It is expressed through speech, quite useful in the communication of passions and opinions, but also is prone to uses of deception and self-deception. The problem is that “[n]o Discourse whatsoever, can End in absolute knowledge of Fact, past or to come... [a]s for knowledge of Consequence, which [Hobbes] called Science, it is not Absolute, but Conditionall.” But while this may be the case, each individual judgment still believes itself to be true or, worse, Truth. As such, disaster also follows in the tail of independent judgment in Hobbes (see 2000, 13-14, 16-19, 25-26, 38-39, 45, 47). In a state of nature which is a state of plurality of wills and judgment (as there are a plurality of individuals) the clash of these plural wills and judgments is inevitable.

At this point, two assertions derived from the previous discussions of Arendt and Hegel need to be stated: First, the individual, in Hobbes's state of nature, of appetites, aversions, and speech—and thus, of will and judgment—is a human being

possessing consciousness of the world (through his/her passions) and self-consciousness (in relation to the will and judgment of others). In the pursuit of desires, this human being works. And through the willing and speaking of the passions and judgments, this human being acts or fights. Second, the plurality of individuals in the state of nature leads to a plurality of actions, resulting in calamitous effects. In the state of nature, where “men live without common Power to keep them all in awe,” we can easily imagine the calamity of such diversity of wills and judgments. Hobbes (2000, 88), himself, imagined and warned of “Warre; and such warre, as is of every man, against every man.”

The state of nature to Hobbes (2000, 87) is a natural condition of equality among individuals in terms of the faculties of body and mind: “For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himselfe.” As for the capacities of the mind, Hobbes does “find yet a greater equality amongst men, than that of strength [f]or prudence is but Experience; which equall time, equally bestowes to all men, in those things they equally apply themselves to.”

From this equality of mind and body, says Hobbes (2000, 87-89), “ariseth equality of Hope in the attaining...of Ends...[a]nd if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their End... endeavour to destroy, or subjugate one an other.” The desire for the same things, however, is not the effective cause of war. Hobbes, instead, blames competition, diffidence, and glory in pursuit of gain, safety, and reputation. Hobbes (2000, 89) paints a ruinous picture of the state of nature, which is also a state of war:

In such a condition, there is no place for Industry...no Culture...no commodious Building...no Instruments of moving and removing...no Knowledge of the face of the Earth...no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.

But Hobbes (2000, 88-89) himself asserts that war does not consist in continuous fighting alone but also in the mere disposition to battle or fight. And the time spent in between these actual fighting—peace—is also part of the condition of war. We can surmise at this point that the acts of fighting also do not entirely or automatically result to killings, and that the articulation of passions and judgments is done in ways other than fighting to the death. Also, Hobbes says that speech is an ability of individuals even within the state of nature, and that they can group together for security purposes in cases of bodily weakness. He did not deny the existence of the family in the state of nature, or even organizations based on kinship. And if we recall that he pointed to the indigenous and primitive communities in North America and Europe as examples of what he theorizes as the state of nature then we can surely claim, without contradiction, the existence of communities in the natural state. We can then interpret Hobbes’s assertion of the state of nature as a state of war, only as absence of an overarching, hegemonic or total industry, culture, knowledge, art, etc. For where do the sciences, reason, and knowledge come from

in Hobbes's treatment of them in the early chapters of the *Leviathan*? Do they not arise from passions, from perceptions of the world, from their articulation in speech, from the enactment of passions through will, from the finality of discourse expressed in judgment? The problem is not that there is nothing but that there are many. Hobbes equates multiplicity with absence. Thus, the reading of Hobbes's description of the state of nature as an absence of culture, etc., is not entirely correct. The state of nature is certainly an absence of a homogeneous industry, culture, knowledge, art, etc. But it is also the presence of heterogeneous industries, cultures, knowledges, arts, etc..

In Hobbes (2000, 90-92, 120, 148, 184, and 214), the particular human passion identified as "Feare of Death," and human reason impel the multitude in the state of nature towards peace. A covenant made with each other constitutes the Sovereign whom, in laying down their capacities, "strengthened him to use his own, as he should think fit, for the preservation of them all: so that it was not given but left to him, and to him onely; and as entire, as in the condition of meer Nature, and of warre of every one against his neighbour." The power of the Sovereign is not given to him but, rather, is retained from and as it was in the state of nature. The surrender of capacities made by those who fashioned the covenant makes the Sovereign's power the only such power within the commonwealth. And thus the multitude enter the commonwealth and become a people—a people determined by the legislations of the Sovereign who has the sole capacity to do so in the commonwealth as he had, but only for himself, in the state of nature. And what do the subjects get in exchange? They get protection, preservation, and security. Security for what purpose? "[A]s that by their owne industrie, and by the fruites of the Earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly..." so that they may enjoy a limited liberty "such as is the Liberty to buy, and sell, and otherwise contract with one another; to choose their own abroad, their own diet, their own trade of life, and institute their children as they themselves think fit; & the like." And so that they may enjoy life. But what kind of life? A managed life without politics as described by Arendt. Life limited to the satisfaction of desires for things without self-consciousness as Hegel might have put it. Mere life.

However, there is still politics in Hobbes's (2000, 120, 172, 184) account as he places the Sovereign within and outside of the commonwealth. One can think, for example, of a state of nature among sovereigns. Thus, Carl Schmitt, who defines politics as the practice of determining friends from enemies and fighting those identified as enemies, properly locates politics outside of state and society into inter-state relations. This conception follows logically from Hobbes. Also, within the commonwealth, politics becomes the Sovereign's management or administration of mere life.

Politics practiced by the Sovereign outside the commonwealth and directed towards other Sovereigns is a state of nature-like struggle. But politics as practiced by the Sovereign within the commonwealth and directed towards its subjects is a politics of mere life. It is a politics of organizing society so that all can individually pursue a contented life of property. Within the commonwealth, the Sovereign possesses the sole free action in the sense of Arendt. Subjects are preoccupied with the pursuit, reproduction, production, and enjoyment of mere life. The Sovereign's politics then applied to society becomes a politics of the necessities of biological

life—what Arendt has lamented as the rise of the social, what Michel Foucault (1990) designates as biopolitics.

And what of the subjects' recognition—the reward of appearing to others through action in Arendt, a requirement of self-consciousness in the quest to be fully human in Hegel? Subjects, according to Hobbes (2000, 128), have no honor in the face of the sovereign:

As in the presence of the Master, the Servants are equall, and without any honour at all; So are the Subjects, in the presence of the Sovaraign... [a]nd though they shine some more, some lesse, when they are out of his sight; yet in his presence, they shine no more than Starres in the presence of the Sun.

Arendt's conception of politics requires the distinction and display of oneself in an agonistic public space. Hegel, meanwhile, can be read to locate politics in the fight among masters for recognition. This is never complete, though, as fight is over mastery and results in inequality. However, the exemplar for both theorists is the Greek *polis* and this resolves to an extent a difficulty in Hegel (Kojève 1980, 59–63); that is, masters are not members of any political formation. This problem connects with Hobbes as individuals in the state of nature are seen to be “solitary.” Yet as we have realized above, we can imagine individuals within the state of nature (also interpreted as the condition of Hegel's masters fighting) as participating in some types of political formation, as the constant war with everyone must bring individuals in face-to-face confrontations, and as language—an inherently social human capacity used to express, among other things, passions and reason—is available to humans in the state of nature.

What define the human condition for Arendt are labor, work, and action co-existing but delimited to their proper realms. Hegel, meanwhile, sees the authentic human being in the synthesis of working and fighting in the slave who finally rebels. Labor, work, action, fight—these are what consist the human condition of *being in the world* and *being with others*. Both theorists see the transcending of mere life (or slavish life) in the quest for human becoming, coupling it or resolving the quest through politics defined by action or fighting. This is the ideal story of becoming human for both theorists, a movement towards wholeness. Hegel appears to be satisfied although Arendt is disappointed with history's result.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Individuals pursue desires in the state of nature. The necessities of life partly constitute these desires. And there is sense in the assertion that the material reproduction of life may lead to conflict between individuals or groups of individuals. The more fundamental cause, however, is the differences of wills, thinking, and judgments in the necessarily plural multitude. The freedom to be one's own judge and one's own source of will, ultimately, is what is given up in making the covenant. The sovereign becomes the sole judge and source of will to ensure the peaceful pursuit of reproducing life. The movement of individuals from the state of nature

towards the commonwealth ruled by the Sovereign then, as I earlier claimed, is a reversed Hegelian history. It is the movement of individuals who labor/work and act/fight in a condition of plurality—that is, potentially full humans—from a time and space of biological and political life towards a time and place of mere life. Politics, properly conceived, got left behind in the state of nature, the condition in which the State/Sovereign still finds itself.

There are other concerns I would like to address or, at least, leave as questions in this concluding section.

First, the status of the state of nature, adopted in this essay as a philosophical construct, is never really resolved by its assumption as such. At the very least, however, the critique of Hobbes's treatment of it opens the way, as was previously pointed out, into a critique of it as an ideological rationalization of any state that confronts citizens unmediated—as individuals alienated and without protection. This might be Alexis de Tocqueville's image of democratic America as mild despotism, the perverse politics of mass society in Arendt, or Agamben's state of exception. Or as I have been arguing all along, Hobbes's absolute state. It seems out of place in this instance to lump de Tocqueville's critique of democracy and Arendt's critique of contemporary mass society with the absolutist and total State favored by Hobbes or with Agamben's state of exception—the logic in Agamben and Hobbes is the same, as Agamben (1998, 35-37 & 105-109) himself recognizes. The power of the Sovereign is the power of the exception—the same power everyone has in the state of nature. Effectively then, the state of exception is the state of nature incarnated (within or as threshold) through the Sovereign decision. Following de Tocqueville (2000, 426 & 663), on the other hand, we find these same fears in his speculation on the extreme possibility of the tyranny of majority in democratic America. This consists in a majority of equal individuals conforming to a uniform worldview and set of behaviors vis-a-vis a powerfully large caring total state reminiscent of Foucault's (1979) pastoral state. The irony is that this mild despotism is empowered by powerless individuals who think and behave in a homogeneous manner: "As conditions become more equal and each man in particular becomes more like the others, weaker and smaller, one gets used to no longer viewing citizens so as to consider only the people; one forgets individuals so as to think only of the species." What de Tocqueville shows is how the very principle that supports the rule of the majority threatens to transform this same restless and plural majority into a "herd of timid and industrious animals of which the government is the shepherd." We have had, of course, more than enough sense of Arendt's fears. There is then an illuminating thread of thought and critique that is revealed in the juxtaposition of de Tocqueville, Arendt, Agamben, and Hobbes (as well as that of many other political theorists) that unfortunately is beyond this essay's scope.

Second, Agamben (1998) provides an alternative interpretation of Hobbes's state of nature and of contemporary sovereignty that precedes and, at the same time, comes after my own. I, for example, repeat (in manner that is different but in a context that is similar) Agamben's (1998, 105-106) assertion that "from the point of view of sovereignty *only bare life is authentically political*." Also, I have already stated that Agamben provides an interpretation of the state of nature as virtually existing in contemporary society in the guise of the state of exception. In Agamben

(1998, 109), the state of nature appears internal to the commonwealth and is manifested (among other manifestations) as a state of dissolution. More specifically, it is the threshold that signals the limits of the commonwealth:

The state of nature is, in truth, a state of exception, in which the city appears for an instant...*tanquam dissoluta*. The foundation is thus not an event achieved once and for all but is continually operative in the civil state in the form of the sovereign decision. What is more, the latter refers immediately to the life (and not the free will) of citizens, which thus appears as the originally political element, the *Urphanomen* of politics. Yet this life is not simply natural reproductive life, the *zoe* of the Greeks, nor *bios*, a qualified form of life. It is rather, the bare life of *homo sacer* and the *wargus*, a zone of indistinction and continuous transition between man and beast, nature and culture.

Third, Carl Schmitt (1996, 65-78) poses the question of the liberal democratic order as eroding the State's monopoly of the political and its appropriation by "indirect powers"—groups, parties, movements of diverse ideologies and interest—that quarrel among themselves in the parliament. This question presents a different interpretation of the rise of the social: not as the application of politics to society that necessarily makes public what is private (as politics practiced by the State domestically must be about mere life) but as a result of the appropriation of the political monopoly of the State by the various organized interest groups in society. What I argue is that the State's practice of domestic or internal politics must deal with the imperatives of mere life. However, as the State itself is technically outside of the commonwealth and within the state of nature, it can and does practice politics that is, in Schmitt's (1989) sense, a process of determining the enemy and fighting it. The State does declare members of its own commonwealth as enemies. But this is not Schmitt's point. The state is threatened by dissolution as the determination of enemies and friends and the fighting of enemies are no longer in the hands of the State but are practiced through the diffused and diluted powers of interest groups. Thus, Schmitt's question is not directly addressed in this essay and poses an important query that might perhaps be addressed in another essay.⁹

Lastly, the contentiousness and multiplicity of politics found in Hobbes's state of nature and in Arendt's conception of politics point toward a possible ethos that privileges contentiousness and multiplicity in confrontations with the state. Here, I use *state* to mean three things at once: government, state institutions, and order. A state that is always challenged and confronted by lived lives that further engender multiplicity is a state that cannot be absolute and total. Contentiousness and multiplicity then become weapons against the state. Contentiousness and multiplicity, in this sense, are also expressions of human freedom.

NOTES

1. These might be investigated more concretely and argued through Foucault's (1984) method of genealogy or a project like Agamben's *Homo sacer*.

2. Mere life as conceptualized and used in this essay follows what has been outlined. It is not, for example, similar to the life of the *Homo sacer* (“who may be killed and yet not sacrificed”) in Agamben (1998, 8). Mere life is biological life in the sense that it is founded on necessity. When placed into the context of society and political community, mere life is economic life (more or less). The life of the *Homo sacer* meanwhile is mere existence, bare life.

3. Of course one can also read Marx as collapsing the difference between the theoretical and the active. In the “Theses on Feuerbach” for example, Marx (1978) asserts that theory and practice are one continuous activity. But it is true that Marx considers labor as the most creative human activity.

4. At least, the actual doing of work and not the product of work. What work produces is the human world. The human world is public.

5. Arendt cites monarchy, or rulership in its many guises (including Plato’s philosopher-king and the Leviathan), as escape from plurality and its calamities.

6. Here, Hegel critiques Kant’s dichotomy of nature as *phenomena* and *noumena*—nature that is constituted by understanding, and nature that is nature in itself. A consequence of such dichotomy is the condition of estrangement or alienation from the “real” nature, ultimately an untenable and tragic position for humans.

7. Here, I follow the interpretation of Hegelian self-consciousness through Jacques Lacan’s “mirror stage” as explained by Slavoj Žižek (1991, 85-91): The reflected image as basis for the self-conscious ego is a misrecognition. This is soon realized as the self recognizes that the image is not really the self—there is always a remainder that the specular image cannot represent or reflect back. This is the Void or the empty space wherein subjectivity is inscribed. This subjectivity is always constituted through an Other, in the sense that both the specular image and the Void (the unconscious, for example) can be confirmed and known through the Other (e.g., the specular image is confirmed to the infant by its parents, the unconscious causes of a neurosis can be discovered with the help of an analyst).

8. The relevant quote is (Kojève 1980, 52):

At the start, the future Master and the future Slave are both determined by a given, natural World independent of them: hence they are not yet truly human, historical beings. Then, by risking his life, the Master raises himself above given Nature, above his given (animal) “nature,” and becomes a human being, a being that creates itself in and by its conscious negating Action. Then, he forces the slave to work. The latter changes the real given World. Hence, he too raises himself above Nature, above his (animal) “nature” since he succeeds in making it other than it was. To be sure the Slave, like the Master, like Man in general, is determined by the real World. But since this World has been *changed*, he changes as well. And since it was *he* who changed the World, it is he who changes *himself*, whereas the Master changes only through the Slave. Therefore, the historical process, the historical becoming of the human being, is the product of the working Slave and not the warlike Master.

9. This essay is already written and will appear in another journal.

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BOOK REVIEW

Terry Eagleton. *The meaning of life:
A very short introduction*

Oxford: University Press, 2007, 109 pp.

For a very short introduction to the meaning of life, this 109-page volume provokes much reflection upon many possible meanings of life. The topic of the book is examined from innumerable perspectives. While the author does not seem to hide his personal views, he does not manifest them as directly as the reader might wish. *The meaning of life* is well-written and witty; it has four chapters, about three pages on "Further reading," a brief Index and a dozen (quite unneeded) illustrations. Although only the first chapter is entitled "Questions and answers," I am wondering whether all four chapters could bear that title appropriately. In any case, the first paragraph of the first page raises the question of meaninglessness: whether the question of the meaning of life is a meaningful question at all; whether it really is capable of carrying a meaningful answer.

A very important inquiry appears in the first two pages, one that pervades much of the book. The question can be posed in terms of various antinomies, such as the following:

language	object
making a thing meaningful	a thing meaningful in itself
prescribed meaning	inherent meaning
subjective meaning	objective meaning
extrinsic meaning	intrinsic meaning
fictitious meaning	real meaning
self-created meaning	discovered meaning

The basic issue here seems to be whether meaning is assigned to things by human beings, or whether meaning is intrinsic to things (including human beings). Another way of posing the problem is to ask whether the so-called natures of things are given by human persons, or whether natures are inherent in things themselves. These alternatives each suggest in the first instance (see first column) that human beings determine or "implant" meanings and natures. The second possibility (inherent or intrinsic natures) suggests to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these meanings and natures in the world. It appears that only the activity of God could be the source of permanent, universal meanings and natures. For example, if human beings determine their own natures, there will be no stable, universal human nature; only if God has created human nature can all persons share that nature. Not

incidentally, the author points out that (in his—or someone's—opinion) inherent or intrinsic meanings and natures do not demand for explanation the existence of God (66).

What are some of the “meanings of life” offered for our reflection in this book? A clue is found in the philosophers mentioned: Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, Augustine, Sartre, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Camus, Derrida, Kafka, Kant, Marx, Ryle, Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, Spinoza, Stein, and Wittgenstein. (St. Paul and Yahweh also appear in the Index.) Literary figures whose names appear include Joseph Conrad, T. S. Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, James Joyce, Shakespeare, Arthur Miller, Virginia Woolf, and Samuel Beckett. References to these individuals provide evidence of the variety of thought appearing in the pages of *The meaning of life*. I will indicate a few of the ideas quoted by the author before focusing upon what seems to me at least a part of his own view.

Very early in the first chapter the author raises some preliminary sorts of questions about questions and issues: Why is there something rather than nothing? What is a meaningful question? Can all questions be answered? (He says no.) How does its context affect a question? Concerning the meaning-of-life question, he says that it is possible that there is an answer, but that we never will know what it is. Also, it “is even conceivable that not knowing the meaning of life is part of the meaning of life” (9). Again, for some (as the ancient Hebrews), the question of the meaning of life was “presumably irrelevant because the answer was obvious” (14). This last point suggests the author’s observation that if “pre-modern cultures were generally less bothered by the meaning of life than Franz Kafka, the same would be true of postmodern ones” (16)—but for a very different reason. The postmodernists, he observes, have gone beyond secularization to question whether there is any such thing as meaning at all. “Humanity” or “human life” becomes quite thoroughly discredited in favor of specific cultures, local situations, etc.—best known, perhaps, as *diversity*. In fact, some “find the meaning of life, or at least a sizeable chunk of it, in the very *diversity* of views on the subject” (29) (emphasis added). (There is now a Diversity Committee in one university to coordinate the diversity—such as LGBTQ month—which itself seems quite diverse!)

For the postmodernist, the author of *The meaning of life* points out, “what counts above all is the quarry”—meaning that the “meaning of life consists in the *search* for the meaning of life” (emphasis added) because questions are preferred to answers. Questions are free-floating; answers are too restrictive. “The point is to have an inquiring mind, not to snap it shut with some drearily determinate solution.” However, the author says, perhaps displaying rather seriously his own attitude, “It is true that this approach does not work too well with questions like... ‘Would this be an effective way of preventing racist murders?’ But perhaps liberals have higher kinds of questions in mind” (29). He concludes Chapter 1 with an offer of a challenge to extreme subjectivism, to those who claim that “the meaning of life is not prefabricated but constructed; and that each of us can do this in very different ways,” commenting that “no doubt there is a good deal of truth in this case; but because it is also rather bland and boring, I want to put it under pressure in these pages.” He wishes to interrogate “this view of the meaning of life as a kind of private enterprise, in order to see how far it holds up” (32).

How far does the purely subjective view of the meaning of life hold up? A few random citations provide a preview of the direction he takes. "Meaning cannot just be whatever I decide" (30). "Words are not just dead husks waiting to have meaning breathed into them by live speakers." "I cannot just make a word mean what I want it to mean" (36). "Let us ask...what it means to claim that meanings are what we 'construct' the world to be. Does this imply that we can 'construct' it any old way we like? Surely not. Nobody actually believes this...it just would not *work* for us to 'construct' tigers as coy and cuddly. For one thing, some of us would no longer be around to tell the tale" (69).

In keeping with this theme and direction of thought, the author raises directly once more in the last part of Chapter 3 the distinction between *inherent* and *prescribed* meanings, that is, meaning given within the nature of the being and meaning attributed by human persons: the former being "somehow built into things or situations themselves, rather than foisted on them" (68). His own view seems to be that "All meanings are human performances, and 'inherent' meanings are just those performances which manage to capture something of the truth of the matter" (70). Perhaps, a synonym for truth in this context might be "reality." The author also says that "meaning is in fact the product of a *transaction* between us and reality" (emphasis added). Furthermore, "Meaning... is something people do; but they do it in dialogue with a determinate world whose laws they did not invent, and if their meanings are to be valid, they must respect this world's grain and texture" (71).

Assigning these alternate views of meaning to the "inherentists" and the "constructivists," the author sees the quarrel immanent to the conflict between Catholic and Protestant theologies, associating the latter with the position of the "constructivists." He characterizes the God of this view as all-powerful—so much so that he cannot be restricted by inherent or essential meanings. Universal essences or natures would constrain the activity of God. The world must be drained of inherent sense. "Reality," the author comments, "for some Protestant thinkers had accordingly to be thinned out, stripped of the thickness which Catholic theologians like Thomas Aquinas ascribed to it" (72). These positions (of some—unfortunately unnamed—Protestants), he says, have been extended into our own times by postmodernism, for which the world "becomes one enormous cosmetic surgery." "Postmodernism simply replaces God here with human beings. Reality is not any way in itself, just the way we construct it to be." This also has become known as voluntarism or anti-essentialism, which "goes hand in hand with irrationalism. Like all tyrants, God is an anarchist, unbounded by law or reason. He is the source of his own law and reason, which are there to serve his power. Torture could well be permissible if it suited his purposes." Without mentioning terrorism directly, the author concludes these comments by observing that "It is not difficult to identify the inheritors of these doctrines in our own political world" (73).

In keeping with his highly positive commentary concerning the "inherentist's" position, the author of *The meaning of life* clarifies an inherent (if you will) flaw of the voluntarists. He begins with a question: "For what if in clearing out essences, you find you have swept out the self along with them?" That is, there is no such thing as human nature. What are the consequences? "The individual self has now taken over God's role as supreme legislator; yet, like God, it seems to be legislating

in a void.” At this point our author suggests an affinity of this view with that of Nietzsche and goes on:

At once solitary and triumphant, the self is the *only* source of meaning and value in a world bleached of inherent significance. Yet this meaninglessness seems also to have invaded its own inner sanctum. Like the Almighty, it is free to inscribe its own meanings on the blank slate of the cosmos; yet since there is now no objective reason why it should act in this way rather than that, this freedom turns out to be vacuous and self-consuming. Humanity itself has become an absurdity. (73-74) [Emphasis added.]

In concluding Chapter 3, the author returns to what seems to me to be his own version of meaning as *transaction* between the self and given realities—which we do not choose or make.

...it is not only what others make of their lives which restricts what I can make of my own. It is also shaped by those features of my existence which arise from my being a member of a natural species, and which are most obvious in the material nature of my body. It could not be part of the meaning of life that I should leap unaided thirty feet in the air three times a day. Any meaningful life-plan which fails to accommodate the realities of kinship, sociality, sexuality, death, play, mourning, laughter, sickness, labour, communication, and so on is not going to get us very far...these universal aspects of human life are lived out very differently by different cultures; but...they bulk large in the course of any individual existence. Many of the central features of personal life are not personal at all. Simply because we are material animals, an enormous amount has already been determined for us, not least the ways in which we come to reason. For our style of reasoning is closely connected to our animality. ...Unless the meaning of life encompasses my material body and my membership of the species, it cannot be said to encompass me. (76-77)

The last chapter (Ch. 4) is entitled “Is life what you make it?” We have seen the author’s answer to some extent: yes and no. Much of *The meaning of life* to this point has been directed to “meaning”; now he turns more directly to “life” and asks whether there is “a phenomenon called human life which can be the bearer of a coherent meaning?” He defends the search for a generalization, asserting that “It is not true that only concrete, particular truths have any force. What, for example, of the generalization that most men and women in history have lived lives of fruitless, wretched toil? This is surely more disturbing than the proposition that most people in Delaware have done so” (79). He adds:

If generalizations about humanity can be valid, it is among other things because human beings, belonging as they do to the *same* natural species, share an immense amount *in common*. To say this is not to overlook the

politically explosive differences and distinctions...[among] them. But those postmodern thinkers who are enraptured by difference, and with dreary uniformity find it everywhere they turn, should not overlook our *common features* either. The differences...[among] human beings are vital, but they are not a solid enough foundation on which to build an ethics or a politics. (80) [Emphasis added.]

After proceeding in quasi-Aristotelian fashion to substantiate the possibility of a meaningful concept of human nature, the author investigates the meaning of this nature and human life by considering *common goals* of human beings. There are numerous candidates; he names twenty-one (88), not including happiness, which he has discussed in the previous seven pages. He dismisses power and wealth as serious prospects, commenting on the latter as follows: "It is astonishing that in the twenty-first century, the material organization of life should bulk as large as it did in the Stone Age. The capital which might be devoted to releasing men and women at least to some moderate degree, from the exigencies of labour is dedicated instead to the task of amassing more capital" (89).

The author seems to suggest that an outstanding candidate for the end or goal of life—which could indicate in a very meaningful way the "meaning of life"—is *love (agape)*, "a practice or way of life" which has "nothing to do with erotic or even affectionate feelings" (95). One reason why love qualifies so highly in this regard is because, despite the fact that our individualistically oriented modern age fails to "see the meaning of life as a common or reciprocal project," "there can be by definition no meaning, whether of life or anything else, which is unique to myself alone. If we emerge into being in and through one another, then this must have strong implications for the meaning-of-life question" (98). Love, then, is taken to signify "creating for another the space in which he might flourish, at the same time as he does this for you. The fulfillment of each becomes the ground for the fulfillment of the other. When we realize our natures in this way, we are at our best" (97). The author's conclusion to his proposal in the "meaning-of-life stakes" is that

two of the strongest contenders...love and happiness are not ultimately at odds. If happiness is seen in Aristotelian terms as the free flourishing of our faculties, and if love is the kind of reciprocity which allows this best to happen, there is no final conflict between them. Nor is there a conflict between happiness and morality, given that a just, compassionate treatment of other people is on the grand scale of things one of the conditions for one's own thriving (98).

The final concluding paragraph of *The meaning of life* by this Professor of English at the University of Manchester and a Fellow of the British Academy reflects the tenor or tone of the whole book.

Have we, then, wrapped up the question once and for all? It is a feature of modernity that scarcely any important question is wrapped up. Modernity... is the epoch in which we come to recognize that we are

unable to agree even on the most vital, fundamental issues. No doubt our continuing wrangles over the meaning of life will prove to be fertile and productive. But in a world where we live in overwhelming danger, our failure to find *common* meanings is as alarming as it is invigorating. (101) [Emphasis added.]

Lastly, it appears that a reader can find in the pages of this very short introduction to the meaning of life much wisdom and much that is not wisdom. Distinguishing the difference obviously requires the application of principles and skills gained from the best possible kind of education—which raises many more questions not wrapped up once and for all.

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BOOK NOTE

Nicholas Fearn. *Philosophy: The latest answers to the oldest questions*

London: Atlantic Books, 2005, 225 pp.

Nicholas Fearn has written a useful book for both beginners and long-time devotees of philosophy. The part of the subtitle that should interest the experienced philosophy professionals would be the “latest answers.” Beginners, meanwhile, will find the lucid and example-laden discussion of the “oldest questions” useful as they try to learn their way about.

How does Fearn manage this juxtaposition? First, he produces three basic philosophical questions (Who am I? What do I know? What should I do?) which designate the three parts of his book. Contained in these three parts are more detailed problems, which constitute the book’s thirteen chapters. We have, for example, under “who am I?” chapters on the self, free will, other minds, and the soul. These different chapters flesh out, for the most part, the classic philosophical problems. They are the “oldest questions” mentioned in the title.

In the course of his exposition of some of the traditional problems in philosophy, Fearn arrives at a point in every chapter where he discusses the current trend of philosophical theory. He does this by inserting the thoughts of living or recently deceased philosophers. This provides the freshest insight to the problems—the “latest answers” so to speak. Hence, we encounter the thoughts of Hilary Putnam, John Searle, Bernard Williams, Richard Rorty, Daniel Dennett, Noam Chomsky, and Jacques Derrida, to name a few, providing the latest wave to our ocean of philosophical questions.

What makes Fearn’s book interesting and unique is that the who’s-who gallery of mid-to-late-20th century philosophers were actually interviewed by the author. According to Fearn, he was able to interview over thirty of the world’s most prominent philosophers in the course of his research for this book. This gives the book genuine value: Fearn launches his popularization quest at least from primary (and first-hand) sources. He does not simply name-drop the philosopher and quotes his idea in the usual route of philosophical scholarship. He first presents the “human side” of the philosopher with a brief biographical note, and then provides a personal insight to the life of the philosopher with amusing anecdotes and witty observations. Hence we discover that Rorty is affectionately called “Eeyore” by some of his peers, Hubert Dreyfuss zips around Berkeley campus in a classic Volkswagen, Chomsky has admirers who look up to him as a sort of rock-star, and Derrida is already alert enough at 7:30 AM to make a phone call.

Though these snippets from the everyday life of philosophers may contribute to the perception that Fearn's book is not for the serious or academic audience, fortunately they are in line with one of the book's goals, which is, by contrast, simply to show the current state of philosophy in a format that is accessible to a popular audience. We should be clear though that Fearn's book is almost journalistic in its presentation of the classic philosophical problems and offers little original insight apart from those of the philosophers featured.

However, there are hints of a philosophical agenda that Fearn doles out in stingy amounts, most notably in his preface and at some other points in the book. For instance, Fearn attempts to show that philosophy has entered what he labels a "post-heroic" age. This is something that he categorically states in the preface. Contemporary philosophers are pictured as more modest, both in terms of lifestyle and (more importantly) philosophical approach/agenda, compared to their illustrious "hero" predecessors. Fearn displays a contemporary flair for philosophical clarity in asserting that it is high time for an "audit" of philosophy: the various "revolutionary" philosophers of the past had all taken their turns at philosophy's "canvas" that "no discernible image remained." In our present day, Fearn argues, we can do away with such revolutionary moves and progress patiently on the path of gradual but steady evolution of ideas.

For Fearn, philosophy had at long last learned from its past "imperialistic mistakes." The empire-building agenda of previous philosophers may be gleaned from their lack of hesitance in applying philosophy to where its reach does not extend. Philosophers now are more modest, and less gung-ho in producing treatises about "anything under the sun."

Academic philosophers would probably demand from Fearn a more thorough discussion of this "post-heroic" age. The informed observer will also notice the strains of analytic philosophy, with its emphasis on clarity and step-by-step analysis, which Fearn implies. One would also notice, for instance, that some notable philosophers (even if Fearn had not interviewed them, he could have at least *mentioned* them) such as Popper, who clearly run against the stream of contemporary philosophy that Fearn had outlined, are conspicuously absent.

A more detailed exposition of this new age of philosophy would have given scholars ample resources to launch commentaries and critiques. However, as mentioned earlier, this may not have been the main point of the book. Fearn's *Philosophy* has to be judged on its immediately perceptible appeal and practical purpose: to push "fringe philosophers" even deeper into the important questions, and to give a brisk update for those who want to be constantly "in the loop" of mainstream philosophy.

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2. 18 June (Saturday) Reuel Rito Narag Seño, M.A. (UP), “The semantics of marriage in the light of Noam Chomsky’s innate structures”
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**PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION
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Miriam College, Quezon City
April 4-6, 2011

**THEME: DEATH OF PHILOSOPHY: DEBATING THE END,
POSSIBILITIES, AND FUTURE OF THINKING**

Day One – April 4 (Monday)

First Keynote Lecture

Julius D. Mendoza, Ph.D. - *Philosophy as pathos*
(Moderator: Mark Joseph T. Calano, Ph.D. - Director, PAP)

Panel 1

Jeff Bartilet - *The end of philosophy and its character of crisis*
Virgilio A. Rivas - *Rethinking freedom in the age of the death of philosophy*
(Moderator: Paolo A. Bolaños, Ph.D. - PRO, PAP)

Panel 2

Wendyl M. Luna - *Foucault and the death of modern philosophy*
Raniel Sta Maria Reyes - *The loss of the real: The end of the medium and the message*
Tracy Ann Llanera - *Shattering tradition: Rorty on edification and hermeneutics* (Moderator: Dean Edward A. Mejos - Treasurer, PAP)

Day Two - April 5 (Tuesday)

Second Keynote Lecture

Remmon E. Barbaza, Ph.D. - *Philosophy in the time of catastrophe*
(Moderator: Celso L. Cainglet, Director - PAP)

Panel 3

Joel Sagut - *Martin Heidegger on Onto-Theology and the Task of Overcoming Metaphysics*
Jeremiah Joven B. Joaquin - *Is Metaphysics really Dead? An Essay on How to take Metaphysics Seriously (Again)*
(Moderator: Corazon T. Toralba, Ph.D. – Secretary, PAP)

Panel 4

Michael F. Hernandez – *Derrida's Passion for the Impossible and the Future of Thinking*

Reuel Rito N. Seño - *Emmanuel Levinas and the Death of Philosophy*

(Moderator: Mira T. Reyes – Faculty, Miriam College)

Panel 5

Jonathan Ray Villacorta - *Metanoia as a Response to Philosophy's Death: From Injustice to Conversion*

Jesus Deogracias Z. Principe - *Socrates' Sailings: Philosophy in the Phaedo*

(Moderator: Fleurdeliz R. Altez, Ph.D. – Faculty, UST)

Day Three - April 6 (Wednesday)

Third Keynote Lecture

Napoleon M. Mabaquiao, Ph.D. - *The death of philosophy through the naturalization of the mind*

(Moderator: Francis Julius N. Evangelista, Ph.D. - Director, PAP)

Panel 6

Darlene O. Demandante - *Reflections on Badiou and Zizek's "philosophy in the present"*

Martin A. Gegajo - *On the perpetuity of reason: Jasperian reflections against the capitalist opposition on the futility of philosophy*

(Moderator: Juanito V. Bernardo Jr., Ph.D. - Director, PAP)

Panel 7

Michael Ner E. Mariano - *Lagging behind science: Scientific materialism and the reduction of philosophy*

Alvin Tan - *The eclipse of philosophy, the rise of technology*

(Moderator: Rolando M. Gripaldo, Ph.D. - Director, Ex-Officio, PAP)

Panel 8

Rudolf Steven N. Seño, OP - *A eulogy for philosophy: A plea for the renewal of her gifts*

Nicole Antonette Del Rosario - *Because all that is can be known: The death of Kant's noumena in Hegel's epistemology*

(Moderator: Raul Alejandrino - Faculty, Miriam College)

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